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OPINION METER

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INSIDE

BUSINESS



President Barack Obama warned China Tuesday that it would not be allowed to gain a competitive advantage in world trade by "skirting the rules."

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The Asian Development Bank is warning countries to prepare for influxes of people fleeing natural disasters as climate change exacerbates rising sea levels, soil degradation and seasonal flooding.

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More Hollywood heavyweights are joining the call for a lower rating on the teen-focused documentary "Bully."

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Senate president slams Fitial for 'lack of plan for Fund.' **PAGE 3**

IN TWO WEEKS' TIME

Healthcare corp. eyes workforce reduction

» **Board wants personnel cost cut to \$250K per pay period**

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

An emergency workforce reduction is being eyed by the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. in the next two weeks in an effort to cut the agency's personnel cost by at least \$250,000 per pay period.

RELATED NEWS

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Over 1,000 CW visa petitions reviewed out of over 5,000 filed

» **USCIS: Many CW petitions reviewed did not have info needed to make final decision**

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

Of the over 1,000 Commonwealth-only worker, or CW, petitions reviewed so far by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, many did not contain information needed in order to make a final decision

See **CW** on **Page 4**



ALL FOR QUEEN MARY 2

Inmates from the Department of Corrections under the supervision of Lt. Pius Yaroitemal cut overgrown vegetation and branches along the road in front of Smiling Cove Marina leading to American Memorial Park a few hours before the area was closed off yesterday in preparation for today's arrival on Saipan of the behemoth British luxury cruise ship *Queen Mary 2* with over 3,600 passengers and crew aboard.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

CNMI bags 16 awards in Guam Chamorro Competition

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

CNMI Public School System students emerged victorious in the Chamorro Language Competition held in Guam this week after they bagged 16 major awards in various categories.

Out of the 42 total awards, CNMI students went home yesterday with eight

See **AWARDS** on **Page 4**

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI Public School System students, principals, and teachers pose for a group photo after the awarding ceremony of the Chamorro Language competition held last Tuesday at the University of Guam as part of the institution's 60th charter day celebration.



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Local

Over 120 foreign investors gather on Saipan

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

Over 120 potential investors mainly from China, Hawaii, and California will be on Saipan for a three-day business conference starting tomorrow, said the Saipan Chamber of Commerce which is welcoming and assisting participants.

Douglas Brennan, president of the Chamber of Commerce, said representatives from an international religious-based business fellowship approached the Chamber for assistance in conducting this conference.

Brennan was referring to the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International.

"We met with Lt. Governor (Eloy) Inos for planning purposes, and SCC is pleased that so many have chosen to visit Saipan to consider investment opportunities," Brennan said.

Hospital staff's delayed housing perks out next week

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

Employees of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. can now heave a sigh a relief after the corporation's chief executive officer Juan N. Babauta disclosed yesterday that their four-month delayed housing allowance could be released as early as Monday next week.

Babauta told the *Saipan Tribune* that housing perks and the next payroll of the corporation's some 600 employees top the priority list of the line of credit it is expected to receive from the Marianas Public Land Trust.

MPLT and the corporation are set to sign today the collateral agreement for \$4.58 million loan approved by the trustees Monday. The amount is inclusive of the \$1.58 million to be used for the hospital's electronic health record project which will entitle the corporation for federal reimbursement.

Babauta attended a series of meetings yesterday to finalize the details of the agreement

Roy Ying, USA national director of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International, will open the Saipan conference at the Aqua Resort Club on Friday at 6pm.

The Chamber said Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos have been requested to speak at the opening ceremonies at Aqua Resort Club on March 16 and the closing ceremonies at the Pacific Islands Club on March 18.

The Fitial administration confirmed yesterday that Inos will be speaking at the closing ceremonies.

Richard A. Pierce, Chamber executive director, is scheduled to welcome the businessmen at the conference opening.

The Chamber said the three-day conference will include presentations by Peter Wagner, dean of Wagner Leadership Institute; Fuli Liu, dean of USA logos

Evangelical Seminary; Zhonghui Chen, dean of USA Agape International Leadership Institute; and other guest speakers.

Conference participants will be traveling to Saipan from many China provinces, as well as Los Angeles, California.

The Chamber said island tours, shopping and meetings with CNMI officials and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce to discuss investment opportunities in the CNMI have been scheduled throughout the three days.

The Chamber said the public is welcome to attend the conference opening and closing ceremonies on March 16 and March 18. Dinners are scheduled both evenings—6pm on March 16 at Aqua Resort Club, and 5pm on March 18 at PIC. Dinner and ceremonies are \$30 each evening. Tickets are available at the doors both evenings, the Chamber said.

with corporation board members and management team to ensure everything is prepared and completed.

He said the \$3 million—of the \$4.58 million loan from MPLT—is not enough to cover all the immediate expenses of the corporation. However, he is thankful that some concerns of the employees will be addressed.

"We are going to pay all those delays [for the housing allowance] and we're hoping it will happen this weekend. So maybe Monday or Tuesday, it will be issued out," Babauta told *Saipan Tribune*, adding that most affected employees on the delayed housing perks are hospital nurses on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

The housing allowance is provided to healthcare providers who were hired outside the Commonwealth. Single employees receive \$600 monthly while \$800 is provided for those with families. The delay covers December 2011 through March this year.

CHC nursing director Leticia Reyes was elated after learning the promised release early next

week of the housing perks.

Reyes said CHC has 167 nurses as of yesterday and of the number more than half receive housing allowance. These nurses include LPNs, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, and nursing assistants.

Babauta also commended yesterday CHC's nurses—mostly from off-island—for their perseverance and patience. At the Rota Health Center, the CEO revealed that nurses have experienced delays in their salaries for some pay periods.

Saipan Tribune learned that there are five nurses on the Rota center who were absorbed by the corporation from the Saipan Employment Agency and Services.

The CEO added that some portions of the \$3 million will also be utilized in paying "a little bit" of the corporation's unpaid obligations to vendors.

To ensure no delay in the personnel payroll next week, Babauta said a significant portion will also be allocated for the purpose.

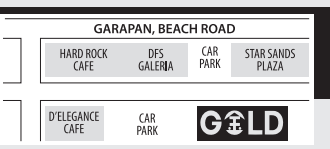
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Senate president slams Fitial for 'lack of plan for Fund'

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) said yesterday it is "unfortunate" that Gov. Benigno R. Fitial lacks a plan to help prolong the lifespan of the NMI Retirement Fund.

Manglona said he could not help but make this assessment after attending the two-day fo-

rum for all parties involved in the lawsuit between the Fund and the central government. The forum was at the invitation of Superior Court associate judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

"I told the judge that if there's a will there's a way. In this case, the governor does not have the will to help the Retirement Fund. It's unfortunate that the governor does not have a plan

to help the Fund. They think problems will disappear overnight and they do nothing," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Manglona said he's calling on the governor to take an active leadership role on the Fund issue.

He said the administration's plan need to solve the Fund's problems overnight, but over the course of a few years.

Manglona also took issue

with the House not acting independently of the Fitial administration.

"The Legislature, specifically the House, needs to assess its independence from the administration. They are separate branches of government," he said.

At this juncture, Manglona pointed out that the Senate has come up with bills, initiatives and recommendations to

prolong the pension agency's lifespan, but they were either ignored or rejected by the House.

"People would ask where will the Fund get the resources? Give them assets of the government," he said.

Among the Senate measures that senators passed in the last few months to help the Fund included Senate Legislative Initiative 17-13, which transfers management

decisions of public land golf course leases to the Fund, and SLI 17-14, which transfers funds from the Marianas Public Land Trust to the Fund.

SLI 17-15 sets aside 25 percent of government revenues to pay the government's employer contribution to the Fund, while Senate Bill 17-99, which transfers the administrative functions of the Government Life and Health Insurance Program from the Retirement Fund to the Department of Finance.

OAG motion to reconsider plea deal with robbery suspect denied

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho yesterday denied the government's motion to reconsider the plea agreement it entered with robbery suspect, Joshua Basaliso.

After listening to the parties' arguments, Camacho a court may grant a motion for reconsideration where there is an intervening change of controlling law; new evidence; or a need to correct a clear error or prevent manifest injustice.

"None of these bases apply in this case," the judge noted.

Camacho said assistant attorney general Eileen Wisor admitted that nothing new had come

to light in the case, but instead simply urged the court to reconsider its earlier ruling to reject the plea agreement.

"Moreover, no new law, clear error or manifest injustice is argued in the written motion," Camacho said.

Furthermore, the judge said, even if he were to reconsider the plea agreement it would reach the same conclusion.

The court in its sound discretion, Camacho said, may accept or reject plea agreements.

In this case, Camacho said, the first proposed plea agreement was not in line with the seriousness of the charges.

Camacho said the agreement attempted to dispose of a robbery charge and a conspiracy

to commit robbery charge, both of which carry a maximum sentence of 10 years, with a three-month sentence.

Moreover, the judge said, if he credits Basaliso's testimony during co-defendant Nestor Taitano's jury trial, it

is Basaliso who committed the assault on the 65-year-old victim.

Last March 1, Camacho rejected the government's plea agreement with Basaliso.

Citing the seriousness of the crimes, Camacho said he is not satisfied with the terms of the plea agreement that the govern-

ment entered with defendant Joshua Basaliso.

Camacho said he believes imposing a time served sentence in this case will not give a good message to the community.

Camacho then set a jury trial for July 9, 2012.

Under the plea deal, Basaliso will plead guilty to assault and

battery.

Basaliso testified for the government in the trial of his cousin and co-defendant, Taitano. He admitted beating up and taking the wallet of Chinese national Guoxi Liang in San Antonio on April 2, 2011. Taitano was acquitted and released from jail.

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Investigators confirm that 11 fires in 3 months arson-related

» All fires occurred in southern part of Saipan

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Department of Public Safety fire investigators yesterday confirmed that 11 fires that occurred from November

2011 to February of this year in the southern part of Saipan were all arson-related incidents.

Police Officer Jason Tarkong said Crime Stoppers is seeking the community's assistance for information on

those fires.

Tarkong, who is also Crime Stoppers Program coordinator, said that, on the month of November 2011, three fires believed to be intentionally set off broke out, including two that occurred on the same day.

On Nov. 17, fire engulfed the former

Tokyo Tower Club on Beach Road, Chalan Kanoa, in the afternoon. That night, blaze razed the former Wonderful Carwash on Beach Road, Chalan Kanoa, next to Sugar Dock.

Two days later, at 10:31pm, The Vegetable Stand/Harvest Market located near the former Sun Leader now called Toha Market was set on fire. The blaze spread and damaged the adjacent Harvest Market.

Tarkong said that on January this year six arson-related fires happened.

Tarkong said that, on Jan. 8 at 12:59am the former Spicy Thai Restaurant in San Antonio was set on fire.

On Jan. 12 at 9:41pm, the former building of garment manufacturer MGM located across Hopwood Junior High School in Chalan Piao was set on fire. The fire damaged the storage area on the first floor of a three-storey building.

At 11pm on the same day while firefighters were still fighting the blaze at former MGM building, a small room located next to Monte Carlo building was also on fire.

Two days later at 2:47am, a building owned by Dr. Cabrera located in Chalan Kanoa was burned.

At 5:36am on the same day, an abandoned building located in Cha-

lan Kanoa south of the U.S. Post Office was burned. The fire spread and razed an occupied structure where several people had been living. One child was hospitalized for smoke inhalation.

On that night, the office of Mount Carmel School president/principal was burglarized and vandalized. The principal's desk was set on fire.

For the month of February, two arson cases occurred in San Antonio.

Tarkong said that, on Feb. 8 at 10:48pm, a fire destroyed the Trench Tech Gym and the former Kalayaan Catering located at the former Michigan Garment Factory.

The blaze started at Trench Tech and spread toward the former Kalayaan Catering, located in the same building.

Tarkong said that, on Feb. 12 at 3:36am, the former Michigan Garment Factory was burned.

Tarkong said the fire also damaged a small room located near the area.

"We need your help. Please contact the Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272 should you want to remain anonymous or use our website at www.nmicrimestoppers.net. Crime Stoppers pays up to \$1,000 for any information leading to an arrest," Tarkong said.

AWARDS

From Page 1

gold, seven silver, and one bronze medal for various categories which included spelling, storytelling, drawing, children's choir, oratorical, poetry recitation, essay, chant, choral reading, proficiency, poetry reading, female and male singer, song with dance, and dramatic cultural interpretation.

For the elementary division, hailed winners were Breanna Camacho who took first place in storytelling, Samantha Sandbergen who won silver for spelling, and CNMI-PSS which emerged second place in the children's choir category.

For middle school division, the three gold medalists were Angelika Narvaez for oratorical, Michelle Quichocho in poetry recitation, and Manantigu Club of Tinian for choral reading.

Also hailed silver medalists in the division were Nicole Quichocho and Alejandra Camacho for essay. CNMI-PSS also bagged second and third places in choral reading and chant categories.

In the high school division, gold medal awardees were Margaret Tudela for oratorical; Francine Sablan for poetry reading; Chloe Hofschneider for female singer; and the CNMI-PSS group for dramatic interpretation.

Silver medal winners were Jennalyn Babauta for proficiency and Jared Borja for male singer. CNMI-PSS was also the silver medal awardee in the song and dance category for the high school division.

Among the CNMI public schools that emerged victorious in the competition was Tinian Junior and Senior High School which entered in the following categories: essay, proficiency, play, male singer, and female singer.

The school group was the gold medal winner in the cultural interpretation and play category for high school.

Principal Julian Hofschneider said he was happy about the competition's turnout where both male and female contenders emerged winners. Jared Borja played his late father's composition, while Chloe D. Hofschneider emerged first place in singing after performing her father's own composition.

Saipan Tribune learned that this is the fourth gold medal award received by Hofschneider in the same category ever since she joined the competition.

"I have been involved as a principal, both in TES and TJSHS, and as a teacher since the inception of this annual competition at the University of Guam and I can say that, every year, the competition gets tougher. The move to revive and preserve the Chamorro language in Guam is very strong and we can see the great improvement amongst their youngsters in every competition—and I commend them for that. To our students, great job and remember that hard work and dedication always pays off," the principal told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, adding the Tinian group is thankful for their supporters which include Mayor Ramon Dela Cruz and the Tinian municipal council.

The annual Chamoru language competition is part of the University of Guam's Charter Day activities on its 60th anniversary. There were 29 participating schools and one Chamoru language club in this year's competition in 19 categories.

CW

From Page 1

and this is one of the reasons why many foreign workers have yet to receive their CW status or permit.

This number of reviewed I-129CW petitions is just a fraction of 5,483 petitions that had entered the USCIS California Service Center database through March 7.

Mariana Gitomer, public affairs officer with USCIS, said yesterday that 11,268 CW-1 workers are sponsored on these 5,483 CW petitions.

These petitions are filed by 1,623 employers on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

Acting press secretary Teresa Kim said yesterday, however, that the CNMI government has received "\$1.8 million in remittances" from USCIS from the \$150 education funding fee paid by CNMI employers for every foreign worker they petition for a CW status.

If the remittances to the CNMI totaled some \$1.8 million and is divided by \$150, then there would be some 12,000 foreign workers petitioned so far. It is not known yet why the USCIS and Fitial administration figures differ.

"We are not given the number of approved filers that that number represents, but if you divide it by \$150, you can figure out the numbers," said Kim, legal counsel for the lieutenant governor.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that there are over 11,000 foreign workers still needed by CNMI employers and businesses at this time.

Employers pay \$150 in education funding fee for each foreign worker they petition for a CW status as required by U.S. Public Law 110-229, which placed CNMI immigration under federal control on Nov. 28, 2009.

Gitomer said USCIS does not have data at this time for CW petition approvals and denials.

She said CW petitions are adjudicated as the biometric results become available for review and USCIS does not have a projected completion date.

"USCIS has reviewed over 1,000 petitions. Many of the petitions did not contain the information needed in order to make a final decision. Several petitions have already received a 'Request for Evidence' and, when a response to such request is received, the petitions will be reviewed for approval or denial," Gitomer told *Saipan Tribune* in an email response to questions.

If foreign workers have not yet received their appointment for biometrics yet, they should not be concerned because, according to Gitomer, the Application Support Center is able to collect biometrics for approximately 128 people per day.

"The appointments for the biometrics collection are not scheduled more than one month in advance. Majority of the CW beneficiaries are currently waiting in queue for a biometrics appointment and will receive notification as soon as an appointment becomes available," she said.

Jun Concillado, vice president of the United Workers Movement-NMI, said yesterday that only a few foreign workers who are members of their movement have received their CW permit or status.

"But we knew it's going to take time for all the CW petitions to be processed and decided on, and we're talking about over 11,000 foreign workers petitioned for CW status. Consider the advance parole application which takes weeks, how much more the over 11,000 CW petitions?" Concillado said.

He said one advance parole applica-

tion, for example, was applied for on Dec. 14 and was approved and released only on Jan. 27.

"So for those whose CW petitions are still pending or who do not have biometrics appointment yet, don't worry. We all know that USCIS is doing their best to work on all the petitions and applications before them. We just have to be patient," Concillado added.

If and when a CW petition is denied, Gitomer said "USCIS will afford each petitioner an opportunity to demonstrate that they are eligible for the CW classification."

"If USCIS determines that the petition may not be approved, the petitioner will receive a detailed notice explaining the reasons for denial and their appeal rights," she added.

In cases when CW petitions are denied and employers appeal the denial, the workers cannot continue to work until the appeal process is completed.

"The decision resulting in the denial of Form I-129CW leaves the beneficiary without lawful immigration status. Absent an approved application or petition which would bestow valid immigration status upon the beneficiary, he or she would be considered present in the United States in violation of the law and would be required to depart the CNMI," Gitomer said.

In a Q&A that USCIS released earlier, it said the administrative appeal process for Form I-129CW is consistent with other nonimmigrant classifications.

To appeal the denial of a CW-1 petition, the petitioning employer in the CNMI must file a Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion. Only the petitioning employer, not an employee, may appeal the denial. An application for a change of status or an extension of status may not be appealed if it is denied.

HEALTHCARE

From Page 1

No less than healthcare corp. chief executive officer Juan N. Babauta and board chair Jack Torres confirmed this separately with *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

The latter said he is expected to meet with the board this month to formalize the matter and work on the numbers that needs to be adjusted in the agency's budget.

The corporation currently employs about 600 personnel on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota with only \$5 million in seed capital.

Because of financial constraints, payroll and obligations to vendors as well as personnel allotments have been delayed numerous times.

Documents obtained by *Saipan Tribune* show that there are 599 total FTEs at the corporation comprised of the following: CEO's office (12 FTEs); Commonwealth Health Center (389 FTEs); Tinian Health Center (58 FTEs); Rota Health Center (62); Community Guidance Center (31); and Division of Public Health (47 FTEs).

"This is not sustainable. We cannot keep everybody on the payroll without the needed money for their salaries," said the board chairman, citing that based on his review, "there are too many political hires" within the organization.

Babauta, for his part, said the emergency workforce reduction is inevitable.

"You should not keep them in payroll. I rather get rid off somebody than to keep him/her and not pay them," he said, adding that with "zero" budget actually coming in to the corporation, people should not be surprised if chaos is happening at the hospital which lacks medical supplies and equipment, suffers delayed payroll and allowances, and his behind allotments for personnel and others.

"It will be across the board so we won't discriminate anybody," assured

Babauta on the impending workforce reduction.

Both Babauta and Torres cannot immediately say how many employees will be affected, saying the decision on who will be retained and let go will be determined by the respective directors and supervisors of divisions.

But the chairman hinted that most of those affected are from public health because the hospital remains the priority.

For every pay period, Torres revealed that target reduction is \$250,000—from the present personnel cost biweekly of \$800,000.

"The emergency workforce reduction may take place sooner than expected, or within the next two weeks. Since we got onboard, we know that we need to do the streamlining measures...and honestly, I am getting frustrated because of the slow pace [of the process]. But I also understand that we need to make sure that everything is in place and in accordance with our policy," the chairman told *Saipan Tribune*.

Last Feb. 14, a new employment manual was issued to corporation employees where it highlighted, among others, the policy on emergency workforce and furlough including termination without cause. This new employment manual replaced the existing rules and exempt staff and employees of the corporation from the application of the Commonwealth Civil Service Act. Compared to the existing employment rules, the grievance, employment termination, and disciplinary and corrective actions rules, are largely new.

Based on the new CHC employment manual, the CEO can enforce a temporary reduction of employees as a result of lack of funding or lack of work. A furlough is an action placing an employee in non-duty and non-pay status because of lack of work or funds as determined by CEO or his designee and valid for 180 days. A furlough that exceeds 180 days shall be considered an emergency reduction in force and shall be accomplished using emergency reduction in force procedures as defined by the manual.

ON HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT CASE VS HOTEL

Manglona denies EEOC's motion for new trial

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The federal court yesterday issued an order that denied the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's motion for a new trial in its sexual harassment lawsuit against the Saipan Grand Hotel that it had accused of subjecting a band singer to a sexually hostile work environment.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona also awarded \$4,376.25 in costs to Saipan Grand Hotel.

In denying the motion for a new trial, Manglona said Saipan Grand's disclosure of Melinda Javier as an impeachment witness five days before trial does not warrant

a new trial.

"Based on this finding, the court need not address whether the time of disclosure of Javier warrants preclusion of her trial testimony, nor whether this substantially interfered with EEOC's full and fair presentation of its case at trial," said Manglona in a 20-page order.

On Dec. 20, 2011, the jury returned a verdict in favor of Grand Hotel.

Last January, EEOC filed the motion for a new trial. Li asserted that the defendants' late disclosure of Javier as a trial witness substantially interfered with the EEOC's fair presentation of its case.

In defendants' reply to the motion, attorney Steven P. Pixley said Manglona permitted the testimony of Javier subject

to well-reasoned parameters surrounding the scope of her employment.

The district court, Pixley said, has broad discretion in permitting or excluding the testimony of witnesses not appearing on witness lists.

Pixley asserted that EEOC's assault on Javier's credibility is not supported by evidence.

The defendants then moved for an award of costs in the amount of \$18,824.21 that they had incurred in defending the lawsuit.

EEOC, however, objected and asked the court to deny the request of award in its entirety. In the alternative, EEOC asked the court to reduce the requested award to only \$4,697.64.

On the motion for a new trial, Manglona said the fact that band singer Michelle Bunoan and former Grand Hotel restaurant manager Roberto Alegre made "eye-to-eye contact" is impeachment evidence against Bunoan's statement that she did not do anything to make Alegre think that she was interested in him.

"As Javier's testimony concerned evidence contradicting

the statement made by Bunoan at trial, it was admissible as impeachment by contradiction," Manglona said.

The judge agreed that Javier's testimony was impeachment testimony.

Manglona said Javier's tes-

timony was used to impeach Bunoan with respect to her assertion that she did not have a romantic relationship with Alegre.

Manglona said because Javier was an impeachment witness, she did not need to be disclosed pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 26.

On costs issue, Manglona said the EEOC's request to

deny all costs to the prevailing defendants "is not well-taken."

Manglona awarded the defendants \$25 for process service fee, \$117.60 for copying and printing costs of documents produced in discovery, \$4,193.63 for deposition expenses, and \$40 for the expert witness fee, or for a total of \$4,376.25.

Fund forum well attended

» Govendo says he is not going to cut retirees' benefits

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo's courtroom was filled Tuesday with retirees, some elected officials, and other parties involved in the longstanding lawsuit between the CNMI government and the NMI Retirement Fund.

After the whole day forum, Govendo did not issue any orders except to say that he is not going to cut the benefits for retirees, *Saipan Tribune* learned.

The forum continued yesterday and he is expected to issue a written order based on the forum.

Govendo organized the forum after learning the frustration of the Fund to get members of the government and interested parties together to work toward finding solutions to the pension program's crisis.

Govendo said the forum is for parties to come together to "voice their concerns, ideas, and recommendations."

The judge asked the retirees how they feel their pensions cut and who should do those cuts.

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) was among at least five elected officials who showed up at the forum. Manglona was among the many attendees who spoke at the podium.

Aside from Senator Manglona, among those who shared their comments and views were Commonwealth Retirees Association chairman Oscar Camacho, Juan Sablan, former Fund board chair Sixto Igisomar, Fund legal counsel Viola Alepuyo, Richard Waldo, and Zoning Board chair Herminia Fusco.

Alepuyo said the Fund board does not have the authority to cut the retirees' benefits.

Alepuyo said the court, however, has a justification to order for cuts of benefits.

"Those cuts they're not cuts of the pensions. They're just deferred payments. Because whatever the payment is deferred will eventually have to be paid back to its members," the lawyer said.

At the forum, some retirees were adamant. They said they do not want their pensions cut at all.

Other retirees said they want their pensions cut. They're hoping the court will cut their pension because they would rather receive little bit pension now for longer period of time than a lot of pension for the next few years only. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

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Sick Rota man evacuated to Guam

APRA HARBOR, Guam—A Coast Guard aircrew piloting an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Air Station Barbers Point in Oahu, Hawaii medically evacuated an ill man from Rota, Wednesday.

Coast Guardsman from Sector Guam command center received the notification from the Rota Health Center Wednesday afternoon.

The patient, a 65-year-old man, was reportedly experienc-

ing symptoms of acute kidney failure. Once the Dolphin was in the air with a Navy medic, the patient was transferred to the Rota International Airport to await the medevac. The patient was flown to Naval Hospital Guam for treatment. The current status of the patient is unknown at this time.

The Dolphin helicopter has been conducting search and rescue exercises between Coast

Guard and local agencies in Guam and assisting with several Coast Guard missions in the area since its arrival. This visit marks the first time in nearly a decade that a Coast Guard Dolphin helicopter has been seen in Guam and CNMI.

For more information about the Coast Guard Mh-65 Dolphin helicopter, visit: <http://www.uscg.mil/acquisition/mch/>. (*USCG*)

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Ban on cell phone use while driving inches forward

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Guam recently signed a law banning the use of cell phones while driving, and the CNMI could follow suit if and when lawmakers heed a House committee recommendation to pass a similar bill for safety reasons.

The House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommended passage of Rep. Stanley Torres' (Ind-Saipan) House Bill 17-143, which restricts the use of wireless telephones whether for calling or texting while driving vehicles, to avoid distracted driving that endangers lives.

The House JGO Committee released its report recommending passage of the bill on Feb. 7, 2012, a few days after then acting Guam governor Ray Tenorio signed a law restricting mobile phone use while driving.

Torres, in an interview, said the CNMI would have been ahead of Pacific islands in restricting cellular phone use while driving considering that he and at least another former lawmaker introduced similar bills in previous legislatures but were unsuccessful in having them passed.

"I hope this time this bill will pass and signed into law. We need to promote safe driving," Torres told *Saipan Tribune*, adding that he himself pulls over when he receives a call

while he's driving.

Torres, one of the longest serving lawmakers in the CNMI, said he would push for adoption of the JGO Committee report and full House action on the bill in the next session. As of yesterday, there's no scheduled House session yet.

Jesse Alonalon, a 43-year-old father of a teen, said he supports this proposal to restrict the use of cellular phones.

"But if it's for emergency call, it should be allowed. For all other calls, they could wait until you already parked your car and safe to answer or make calls," he said.

Exemptions

H.B. 17-143 or the Commonwealth Wireless Telephone Restrictions in Vehicle Safety Act of 2011 makes some exemptions.

For example, it allows the use of wireless phones designed to allow hands-free listening and talking and is used in that manner while driving.

The ban on cell phone use while driving does not apply to persons using wireless phones for emergency purposes including but not limited to an emergency call to a law enforcement agency, health care provider, fire department, or other emergency services agencies or entities.

This also does not apply to emergency services professionals using wireless phones while operating an authorized

emergency vehicle in the course and scope of his or her duties. Emergency services include law enforcement, health care, fire division and other related emergency services.

The bill also exempts from restrictions the use of digital two-way radio that uses a wireless telephone that operates by depressing a push-to-talk feature and does not require immediate proximity to the ear of the user.

This also does not apply to persons while driving on private property.

Persons under 18 years old

Persons under 18 years old are prohibited from using wireless phones to talk or text while driving, even if the wireless phones are equipped with a hands-free device, or while using a mobile service device.

Exemptions are for emergency calls.

The first offense is punishable by a \$50 fine, and \$100 for each subsequent offense.

Under this section of the

bill, "mobile service device" includes but is not limited to a broadband personal communication device, specialized mobile radio device, handheld device or laptop computer with mobile data access, pager and two-way messaging device.

In a nine-page report, the JGO Committee said although the use of cellular phones is advantageous to immediately communicate with family, friends, associates and clients, there is a need to regulate such use to ensure the safety of many residents specifically when used while driving a vehicle.

"The overall safety of the Commonwealth's general public is of great importance and is enhanced by the enactment of this measure. Therefore, benefits resulting from the enactment of House Bill 17-143 far outweigh the additional costs that may arise," the committee said.

Rep. Janet Maratita (Ind-Saipan) said she supports this bill because of its focus on motorist safety.

"This is a sound policy that I hope my colleagues will also support. It's dangerous to use your cell phone while driving. Studies and studies have shown that that is the case," she said, adding that she was supposed to introduce such a bill but later found out that a similar one had already introduced.

Driving distractions

The House JGO Committee, chaired by Rep. Ralph Demapan (Cov-Saipan), cited three main types of driving distractions including visual which takes one's eyes off the road; manual, which takes one's hand off the wheel; and cognitive, which takes one's mind off what they're doing.

"All distractions endanger a driver's safety," the committee said.

Texting while driving, however, is the most alarming because it involves three types of driving distractions.

The committee cited national studies, including the findings

that of those killed in distracted driving-related crashes, 995 or 18 percent involved reports of a cell phone as a distraction.

The age group with the greatest proportion of distracted drivers was the under-20 age group. The committee, citing studies, said 16 percent of all drivers younger than 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported to have been distracted while driving.

"Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves," the JGO panel said, quoting data from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

A University of Utah study, quoted by the JGO panel, also shows that using a cell phone while driving—whether it's hand-held or hands-free—delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent.

As a result of potential hazards, most states have in some form enacted statutes that regulate the use of handheld devices or texting while driving in order to reduce the dangers of distracted driving for the general public.

Kilili announces \$65,357 grant for Maternal and Child Health

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan announced recently that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has awarded a grant of \$65,357 to continue the CNMI Maternal and Child Health Data System Linkage and Training Initiative through FY 2012.

"The Commonwealth's health system is struggling for funding," said Sablan, "so every dollar of federal assistance is welcome."

The grant is more than twice the \$30,832 the Commonwealth received in 2011 for the data system. The multi-year project

aims to provide the CNMI Department of Public Health access to a more comprehensive information database on maternal and infant health and aid in improving the well-being of women and children in the Marianas.

Funding for this grant is pro-

vided by the State Systems Development Initiative, a complement program to the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant.

President Barack Obama, in his FY 2013 budget proposal, requested \$640 million in funding for this grant program, a \$1 million increase from FY 2012. (PR)

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Bank of Guam donates \$3K to MMAC

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Bank of Guam donated last March 13 a check worth \$3,000 in support of the 2012

Donation of 5-gallon yellow paint sought

Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council chair Ramon B. Camacho is seeking companies or individuals who can donate one 5-gallon container of yellow paint to be used for road curbs and bumps along Alaguan St.

Camacho said they already have one container of yellow paint which will be used on Saturday by volunteers, most of whom are residents along the street.

He said the volunteers will do the painting of the road curbs

Marianas March Against Cancer next month.

The donation makes Bank of Guam achieve title sponsorship, the highest level of sponsorship of the MMAC event and is con-

ferred on companies that donate in cash or services valued at \$3,000 or more.

MMAC is the largest signature fundraising event of the Commonwealth Cancer Association, a volunteer-led non-profit organization that ensures all funds raised are spent on cancer patient support services, cancer awareness programs and other cancer-related activities in the CNMI.

This year marks the 10th year of the MMAC which is slated for April 27 to 28 from 6pm to 6am at the Hopwood Jr. High School field in Chalan Piao.

Bank of Guam vice president and CNMI regional manager

presented a newly renovated bus stop by the P&A Laundromat in Koblerville. P&A general manager Ho Joon Jo, Camacho, Koblerville Neighborhood Watch Task Force members, and police officers were at the site for the formal handover of the project.

"You make them involved in anything and the sense of care is there, that's why we need more people to participate and have a sense of ownership," Camacho explained. (Clarissa V. David)

DUI sobriety checkpoints on March 16 and 17

The Commonwealth State Police, Department of Public Division, Traffic Investigation Unit will be conducting DUI/sobriety checkpoints on the dates and time listed below:

Friday, March 16

■ First setup 6pm-7:15pm, Beach Road Susupe in front of the Minatchom Adtao

■ Second set up 8:30-9:45pm, Chalan Pale Arnold, Gualo Rai in front of Coastal Resources Management (CRM) office.

■ Third setup 10:30-11:45pm, Beach Road, Chalan

Laulau adjacent to Dr. Benusto Kaipat's residence.

Saturday, March 17

■ First setup 6-7:15pm, Chalan Monsignor Guerrero, Chalan Kiya by the CUC Waterloo.

■ Second setup 8:30-9:45pm, Chalan Pale Arnold, Chalan Laulau in front of IT&E building.

■ Third setup 10:30-11:45pm, Beach Road, Garapan across from Bank Pacific.

Each DUI/sobriety checkpoints will last at least 75 minutes (1hr.15mins). This activity is part of the Commonwealth State Police, DPS' effort to deter, detect, and apprehend impaired drivers and to ensure that all vehicles occupants are protected. In addition, traffic investigators and highway patrol officers will conducting highway criminal interdictions, saturation, patrols, aggressive driver interdictions, and laser (speed detection) enforcement.

For more information, contact Sergeant Anthony Macaranas, traffic section at 664-9084 or 9085. (PR)

Marcie Tomokane and bank officer Dave Guerrero presented the check donation to MMAC representatives Catherine Attao-Toves, Rachel Roque, Reina Camacho, Christopher Concepcion, and CCA board member Maggie Camacho.

Tuesday's check presentation coincided with the 40th anniversary of Bank of Guam, which was founded on March 13, 1972.

"On behalf of the 2012 MMAC committee, we extend our utmost appreciation to the Bank of Guam for their \$3,000

donation," said Attao-Toves, 2012 overall committee chair. "We value their support in the battle against cancer."

Other title sponsors for the 2012 MMAC are Delta Air Lines, DFS Saipan, Ltd., IT&E, Joeten Charitable Foundation, Sorensen Media Group Saipan, and Take Care/FHP. Major sponsors are IP&E, KKMP, Mobil Oil, Saipan Mayor's Office, and Younis Art Studio.

For more information, call 285-1828, email attaoc@yahoo.com or visit www.cca-marianas.org.



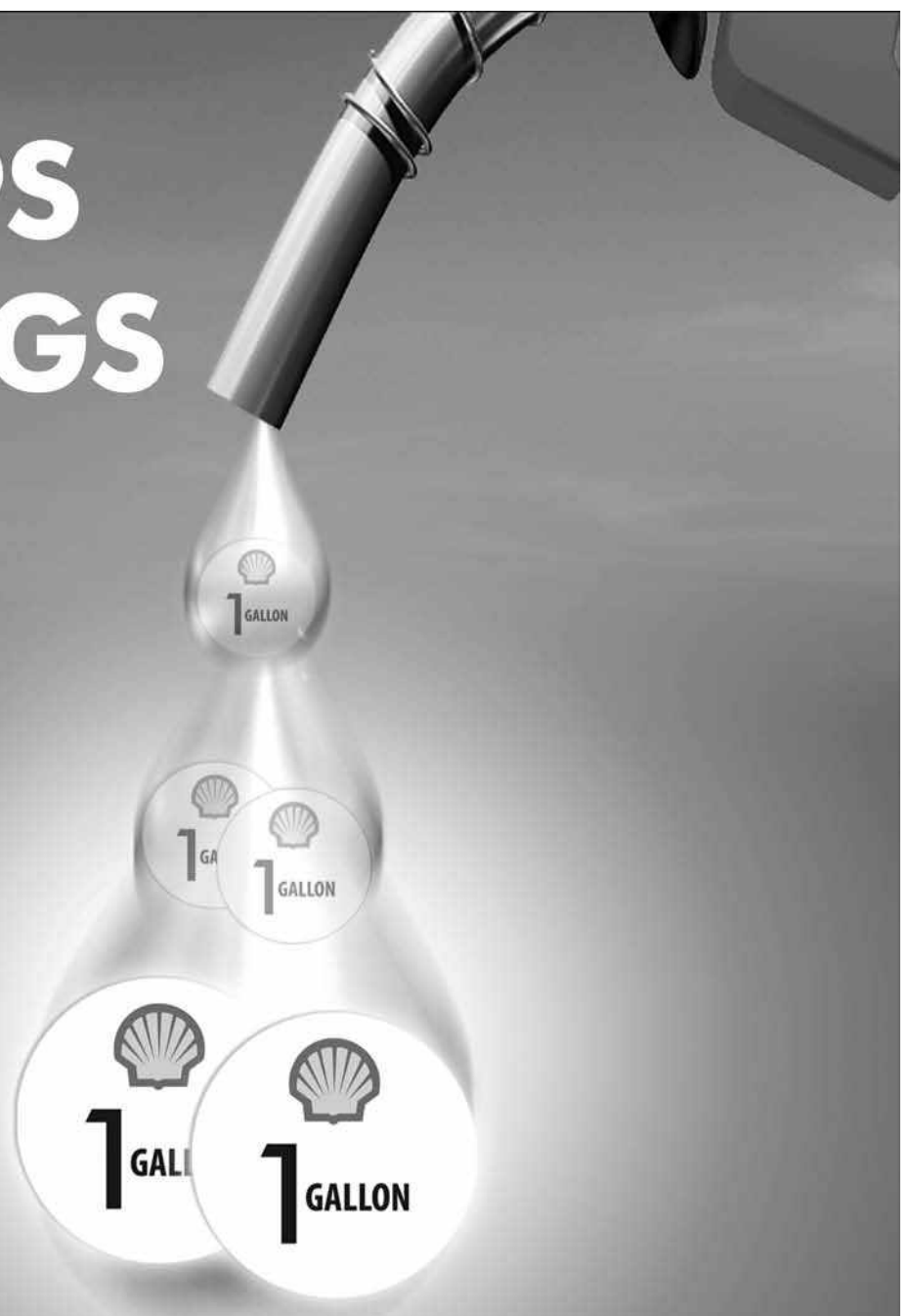
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Bank of Guam vice president and CNMI regional manager Marcie Tomokane, center, presents the \$3,000 donation to Commonwealth Cancer Board member Maggie Camacho, second left, and 2012 Marianas March Against Cancer committee members led by overall chair Catherine Attao-Toves, second right, in a brief ceremony on Tuesday. Also in photo are, from right, Bank of Guam officer Dave Guerrero, sponsorship chair Rachel Roque, team recruitment chair Reina Camacho, and public relations chair Christopher Concepcion.

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'MRDC should give timetable for \$300M casino project'

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Tinian Mayor Ramon M. Dela Cruz maintained that casino investor Marianas Resort Development Corp. should give the government a "timetable" as to when they intend to start construction for their proposed multi-million project despite being up-to-date with their public land lease payments.

MRDC plans to build a \$300-million Matua Bay Casino Resort on Tinian, inclusive of an 18-hole championship golf course.

"If these people cannot continue to hold on to public land

even if they're paying the lease, we have to give them some kind of timetable to start construction because there's a lot of people waiting for that public land," Dela Cruz said in an interview.

According to Dela Cruz, a major construction company out of Taiwan is interested on the property being leased by MRDC.

"It's one of the biggest construction companies out of Taiwan. They have holdings throughout the world; they have quite a few affiliates out of Honolulu, in New York, and now they're building almost an entire city in Turkey," he said.

Dela Cruz declined to identify

the name of the company but added that it is also interested in investing into Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino and in the island's infrastructure.

Although MRDC is "very current" with its land lease, the mayor argued that the company should only be given time to "break ground" in the next six months or give it to another investor like the Taiwanese company.

Dela Cruz said representatives of this Taiwanese compa-

ny will be back again by the end of the month for another round of meeting.

He said that another investor, Neo Gold Wings, has transferred its interest to Vitala, a major financing company out of Italy and Germany.

Dela Cruz noted, however, that Department Public Lands Secretary Oscar M. Babauta informed him that its land lease has already been terminated "so they have to start all over again."

5K Hope Run raises \$4.6K for scholars

The Saipan Seventh-Day Adventist School held a successful 5K Hope Run last Sunday, raising over \$4,600 for its scholarship program.

Event organizers surpassed their targeted number of runners as Sunday's run, which started at the Garapan Fishing Base up to Trankun Da'u and the Filcom Pavilion in Susupe, had a total of 99 runners.

This year's theme was "Live to Learn, Live to Love, Live to Give."

The Top 10 runners who received an award were Greg Sakisat (20:37), Tim Quan, (21:14), John Douglas (21:24), Steven Pixley (21:41), Ken Pierson (21:49), Unknown (22:40), Julius Rey Barro (22:54), Frank Diesta (23:16), Tamio Nichikido (23:30), and Travis Spaeth (23:36).

The Top 3 finishers for each category also received an award. Donated prizes were also raffled off to both runners and non-runners.

SDA Clinic will match the amount raised by the school to allow the scholarship program help deserving students.

SDA School thanked their sponsors for their continued support. They are 360 Revolving Restaurant, AON Insurance, Aqua Resort Club, Borderline, Docomo Pacific, Gold's Gym, Hardt Eye Clinic, Hyatt Regency, Island Apparel, IT&E, Joeten Enterprises, Laolao Bay Golf Resort, Lollipops, Marianas Resort & Spa, McDonald's, National Office Supply, Pacific Islands Club, Saipan World Resort, SDA Clinic, Subway, Triple B Forwarders, and TSL Foundation. *(Clarissa V. David)*

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Mar. 15, 1999

CPA satisfied with \$20M bond rating

Commonwealth Ports Authority executive director Carlos H. Salas said he is satisfied with the BBB minus rating given by Fitch/IBCA to the \$20 million airport bond. The bond rating, which came out on March 9, has at least prevented the current interest rate of 6.25 percent from increasing to 6.70 percent. Salas said this would also entice investors to buy the bonds from current bondholder the Franklin Fund. However, the ports authority is still awaiting the investment grade rating for the \$33 million seaport bond. Salas has expressed concern that the delay may have something to do with the projected drop in orders from garment manufacturers here in connection with the \$1 billion lawsuit filed by garment workers against manufacturers and buyers.

Panel kicks off public hearings on FAS measure

The House of Representatives begins today a series of public hearing on a proposed legislation that will restrict the stay of citizens of the Freely Associated States on the CNMI as part of the effort to gather views from residents worried over their growing strain on public funds and infrastructure. A hearing is scheduled by a joint panel comprised of the committees on Federal and Foreign Relations as well as Labor and Immigration at 7 p.m. tonight at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe, according to a statement. Several island officials have been invited to the town meeting which comes on the heels of mounting support for the proposal from government agencies that have expressed concern on the impact of unrestrained entry of FAS citizens into the Northern Marianas.

Mar. 15, 2000

Proposed one-stop permitting office opposed

The Coastal Resources Management Office has opposed a plan to establish a One-Stop Building Permit Center because it will not be feasible for a broad-based multi-jurisdictional regulatory authority setup currently existing in the CNMI. A proposed measure introduced by Rep. William S. Torres has sought the creation of a One-Stop Center to reduce the bureaucracy and cause unnecessary delays in acquiring building permits in various government agencies. Several efforts have been made which even led to the creation of task forces to look into the possibility of changing the current permitting system which has been widely criticized for being too bureaucratic.

Funding for Tinian airport identified

Everything has been set for the much-delayed rehabilitation of the West Tinian International Airport runway except for the technical aspects of the construction which is now under review by the Federal Aviation Administration. Ports Authority officials said necessary funds for the rehabilitation of the Tinian air transport facility have already been identified. The entire project was estimated to cost \$20 million. FAA has granted close to \$10 million in total funding for the construction of the new Tinian airport runway while the CNMI government allocated nearly \$10 million in Capital Improvement Project funds for the Tinian air transport facility under the provision of Public Law 11-79.

Mar. 15, 2003

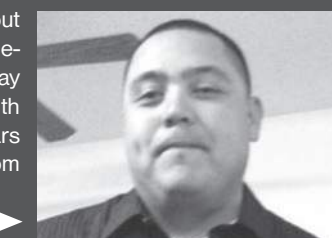
Torres: WASC was misinformed

Saipan Rep. Stanley Torres sees the recent warning of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges about the Northern Marianas College' accreditation status as "bureaucratic bullying" based on misinformed statements, "which were most likely groomed" by NMC president Kenneth E. Wright. In his March 13, 2003 letter, addressed to WASC executive director for Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Barbara A. Beno, Torres said that Beno's "finger-pointing" was "most disconcerting." "Regarding your recent warnings and solicited ultimatum. I find your misinformed statements, which were most likely groomed by Mr. Wright, to be filled with half-truths and bureaucratic bullying. Furthermore, I find your political finger-pointing at the CNMI Civil Service Commission and indirectly at our CNMI Legislature and Public Auditor to be most disconcerting," the lawmaker said.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS

Happy birthday greetings go out to John P. Aguon! May your special day be truly special and may the good Lord shower you with blessings today and in the years to come. Greetings come from Alona.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Happy 21st birthday to an amazing son, brother, and uncle—Luiz "Zi" Reyes. Remember the secret of staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly, and lie about your age, LOL. Enjoy your special day, we hope you have an awesome one! Loving you always Mom, Dad, and the family!

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
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Attorney for Plaintiff,

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

<p>COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, Plaintiff,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">vs.</p> <p>GLOBAL TRADING, LTD., HERMAN R. GUERRERO and LUCY P. GUERRERO, Defendants.</p>	<p>COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, Plaintiff,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">vs.</p> <p>BOBBIE'S AMUSEMENT CO. INC, BARBARA A. PANGELINAN, and THE ESTATE OF JOHN DLG. PANGELINAN, Defendants.</p>
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Civil Action No. 03-0174

NOTICE OF AUCTION

The Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, hereinafter referred to as auctioneer, and the Development Corporation Division of the Commonwealth Development Authority, hereinafter referred to as CDA, hereby give notice that all of the right, title, and interest of the Defendants Global Trading Ltd., Herman R. Guerrero and Lucy P. Guerrero in the following described, real property situated in Saipan, CNMI will be sold at an auction:

Lot No. 011 D 25, located in Garapan, Saipan, containing an area of 773 square meters, more or less, as shown on the Division of Lands and Surveys Official Plat No. 011 D 00 dated December 14, 1970, including all existing and future improvements, appurtenances and easements on said property;

and

Lot No. H 328-7-2, located in Capitol Hill, 1,238 square meters. Lot No. H328-7-2 is more particularly described on DLS Check No. 2059/94, which is recorded as File No. 93-4304, at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office, including all improvements, appurtenances and easements therewith.

The auction sale will be open to the general public and will be held at CDA's Conference Room, Saipan, at **2:00 p.m., on Friday, March 16, 2012**, subject to the following announced terms and conditions:

- Minimum Bid. No minimum opening bid.**
- Reserve.** The auction shall be held with reserve.
- Rights and Duties of Auctioneer.** Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable law of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auctions with reserve, auctioneer shall have the following rights and duties in conducting the auction:
 - To withdraw the property listed for sale in this announcement before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted;
 - To adjourn the sale without notice at any time before any specific property is struck off, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and
 - To reject, on behalf of the seller, any and all bids.
- Bids.** Tentative bids may be submitted in advance for any and all of the property listed in this notice. Such bids shall not be binding, except that the highest of such bids will automatically be considered the opening bid for the item. Bids may be entered in person, in writing, or by telephone to Manuel A. Sablan, Executive Director, Commonwealth Development Authority, P.O. Box 502149, Saipan, MP 96950, Phone: 234-7145, Fax 235-7147; or to F. Matthew Smith, P.O. Box 501127, Saipan, MP 96950, Phone: 234-7455, Fax: 234-7256.
- Deposit Payment.** A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. The remaining balance will be due within ten (10) days of the auction sale. All payments must be made by cash, cashier's check or credit card. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within ten (10) days will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the ten percent (10%) deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in any of the aforementioned property will revert to CDA.
- Change of Terms.** Auctioneer and CDA reserve the right to change any of the terms of conduct and enforcement of sale by announcement, written or oral, made before the auction or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause, shall be binding on any buyer by constructive notice.
- Inspection and No Warranty.** Bidders are cautioned to inspect the title and property; contact CDA for scheduled viewing and inspection times. The interests of Global Trading, Ltd., Herman R. Guerrero and Lucy P. Guerrero in the property are being sold "AS IS" and without warranty, and subject to the redemption laws of the CNMI. Failure to inspect the real property will not constitute a ground for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer.

Dated this 2nd day of February 2012.

/s/ RAMON C. MAFNAS, Commissioner
Department of Public Safety

*Master Card and Visa only: a 2% processing fee will be charged on credit card payment(s).

Civil Action No. 10-0360

NOTICE OF AUCTION

The Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, hereinafter referred to as auctioneer, and the Development Corporation Division of the Commonwealth Development Authority, hereinafter referred to as CDA, hereby give notice that all of the right, title, and interest of the Defendants Barbara A. Pangelinan n/k/a Barbara A. Yamada and the Estate of John Dlg. Pangelinan in the following described, real property situated in Laulau, Saipan, CNMI will be sold at an auction:

Description of Lot 012 G 21, part of Lot 012 G 03, situated in Laulau, Saipan, CNMI beginning at a corner which is designated as Corner No. 1, having plane rectangular coordinates of 50,202.929 meters North and 56,224.770 meters East of Mariana Islands District Coordinate Systems of 1966.

Thence N 63° 45' 20" E, 35.663 meters to Corner 2;
Thence along "the arc of curve for 14,493 meters, curve date being central angle of 02° 58' 29" a radius of 279.148 to Corner 3;
Thence N 60° 46' 51" E, 44.991 meters to Corner 4;
Thence S 28° 20' 28" E, 55.871 meters to Corner 5;
Thence S 61° 39' 32" W, 95.115 meters to Corner 6;
Thence N 28° 20' 28" W, 116.640 meters to Corner 1.
The point of beginning, including all improvements, appurtenances and easements therewith.

The auction sale will be open to the general public and will be held at CDA's Conference Room, Saipan, at **2:00 p.m., on Friday, March 16, 2012**, subject to the following announced terms and conditions:

- Minimum Bid. No minimum opening bid.**
- Reserve.** The auction shall be held with reserve.
- Rights and Duties of Auctioneer.** Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable law of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auctions with reserve, auctioneer shall have the following rights and duties in conducting the auction:
 - To withdraw the property listed for sale in this announcement before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted;
 - To adjourn the sale without notice at any time before any specific property is struck off, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and
 - To reject, on behalf of the seller, any and all bids.
- Bids.** Tentative bids may be submitted in advance for any and all of the property listed in this notice. Such bids shall not be binding, except that the highest of such bids will automatically be considered the opening bid for the item. Bids may be entered in person, in writing, or by telephone to Manuel A. Sablan, Executive Director, Commonwealth Development Authority, P.O. Box 502149, Saipan, MP 96950, Phone: 234-7145, Fax 235-7147; or to F. Matthew Smith, P.O. Box 501127, Saipan, MP 96950, Phone: 234-7455, Fax: 234-7256.
- Deposit Payment.** A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. The remaining balance will be due within ten (10) days of the auction sale. All payments must be made by cash, cashier's check or credit card. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within ten (10) days will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the ten percent (10%) deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in any of the aforementioned property will revert to CDA.
- Change of Terms.** Auctioneer and CDA reserve the right to change any of the terms of conduct and enforcement of sale by announcement, written or oral, made before the auction or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause, shall be binding on any buyer by constructive notice.
- Inspection and No Warranty.** Bidders are cautioned to inspect the title and property; contact CDA for scheduled viewing and inspection times. The interests of Bobbie's Amusement Co., Inc., Barbara A. Pangelinan n/k/a Barbara A. Yamada and the Estate of John Dlg. Pangelinan in the property are being sold "AS IS" and without warranty, and subject to the redemption laws of the CNMI. Failure to inspect the real property will not constitute a ground for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer.

Dated this 2nd day of February 2012.

/s/ RAMON C. MAFNAS, Commissioner
Department of Public Safety

*Master Card and Visa only: a 2% processing fee will be charged on credit card payment(s).

Traditional canoes sail forward in Micronesia

COLONIA, Yap—A group of young men in Micronesia are putting the final careful touches on a traditional dugout canoe they built. The teenagers, who have been working in Gargey on Yap, are Lamotreke. They're the sons of families who've migrated to Yap Proper from the much smaller islands and atolls further to the east known as the Outer or Neighboring Islands.

"As far as we know, this is the first time Outer Islanders have ever built a canoe on Yap for our own use," said Larry Raiget, one of the men who helped establish the project. "That makes this really special."

Raiget is also from Lamotrek, a tiny coral atoll of 400 people about 600 miles from Yap.

Historically, Outer Islanders traded finished goods such as woven skirts and mats for canoes built on Yap Proper. This was part of a far-reaching pattern of trade and tribute that spanned hundreds of miles across the Caroline Islands in the Central Pacific Ocean.

Raiget explains how the promise of healthcare, education and employment has drawn more and more Neighboring Islanders to the larger, more developed islands in Micronesia that serve as that nations four state capitals. One of the complications of the move is the break that many people -especially the young people- have with their families traditions. Those traditions are based on the routines of social life in the isolated Outer Islands.

The project, which goes by the name of Waagey (an Outer Island term for future) has been a partnership between young and old; between those who've come to call Yap Proper home and those who remain in the Neighboring Islands.

One of the more experienced canoed builders from Lamotrek named Xavier Yarofaliyango traveled aboard a state owned cargo vessel to Yap. Yarofaliyango and the traditional navigator Ali Haleyalur served as mentors and guides for the young men.

"This is a journey, which is how we think about canoes and travel in our islands, but this is also a return," said Ali Haleyalur.

Waagey complete its first small canoe (roughly 15 feet long) in early March. The group has also fallen and dug-out logs for a second, much larger canoe, which may be in the 30 to 35 foot range. The makings of that larger canoe, which could ultimately be among the longest traditional Caroline Island canoes in existence, will be sent to Lamotrek aboard the state vessel soon. It will be completed in the Outer Islands, giving more young men a connection to the project.

"This is a great locally grown effort," explained Scott Leis, a volunteer with the US-based Habele Outer Island Education Fund. Habele is a group of former Peace Corps volunteers and other Americans working to support K-12 aged students Micronesia.

They provided Waagey with chainsaws and money for paint and other supplies.

"Not only does this revive an important traditional activity and sense of cultural identity," said Leis, "it also gives young men a sense of belonging and accomplishment. That seeps through all aspects of their lives."

Leis, who was in Yap to help with the project last month, explained that Habele also supports low-income Outer Island students at the small private schools on Yap through tuition scholarships.

Raiget sees these two canoes as a solid first step. His wife, Regina, is working in parallel with young Outer Island women on Yap. They've begun to pair older women with young girls and teens, passing on the intricacies of traditional weaving techniques used to create lava lavas (distinctive skirts with horizontal lines) and handicrafts.

Regina, a native of Fais Island, is also patterning with the Yap State Womens organization and women's groups in the Outer Islands. They are hoping to someday market some of the finished goods. These items, with such a history and so much importance to our culture, can also be such a tool for the younger generation, to learn who they are and what they can accomplish.

More information about Waagey and other K-12 student projects in Micronesia can be found online at www.habele.org. (PR)

New report urges cautious approach on mariculture in the Pacific

A new report on mariculture (marine aquaculture) has urged Pacific nations to think twice before embarking on sea-farming enterprises.

It found that many mariculture projects had been undertaken in the past without proper economic studies, particularly of the costs involved and the potential markets for fish products.

Mike Batty, Director of SPC's Marine Resources Division, says the Pacific has a 30-year history of failed attempts at mariculture.

"The lessons from these failures have not been learned," he said. "Mariculture is not easy and it's not cheap. Pacific Island nations should think of it as one possible option, rather than something to be promoted at all costs."

Potential difficulties include expensive feed, long cropping cycles, competitive markets, expensive transportation and products requiring high labour inputs. The report describes mariculture as a risky activity.

The report *Opportunities for the Development of the Pacific Islands Mariculture Sector* was released on March 1.

It calls for more thorough

market appraisals and estimates of production, distribution and marketing costs of any proposed new venture. The involvement of private industry at an early stage in research and development helps add a dose of realism.

The report includes on-ground assessments of mariculture activities in five Pacific Island countries (PNG, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Cook Islands and Marshall Islands).

Fisheries staff, fish farmers, traders, processors and finance organizations were consulted in these countries.

The report is not entirely gloomy about the prospects for mariculture. Some products in some countries show promise, but their potential has to be rigorously assessed to see if they could become sustainable industries.

The Pacific Islands are best known for pearl culture, although this industry is facing problems at the moment. Farming seaweed, shrimp, coral, sponges and some types of fish are among mariculture activities that can work under the right conditions.

The report Opportunities for the Development of the Pacific Islands Mariculture Sector is available at: www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/Doc/FAME/Reports/HambreyConsulting_12_MaricultureReport.pdf. (SPC)

Fiji ruler ends chiefs council, 130-year tradition

SUVA, Fiji (AP)—Fiji's military commander has disbanded the Great Council of Chiefs, a leadership tradition on the Pacific island nation that dates back more than 130 years.

Commodore Frank Bainimarama had greatly reduced the power of the council before eliminating it entirely on Wednesday. His latest move may be an attempt to prevent the council from being written into the new constitution he has promised to help produce within the next year.

The council was established under British colonial rule in 1875. Its 55 chiefs had refused to endorse Bainimarama's rule.

Bainimarama says the council perpetuated elitism, but an expert on Pacific politics says the Fijian people should have been allowed to decide its fate.



NOTICE OF SALE
CDA FORECLOSED PROPERTIES

The Commonwealth Development Authority (CDA) hereby gives notice that it is seeking interested buyers, bids and proposals for the fee simple purchase or the leasing of its foreclosed properties. The specific foreclosed properties available for sale or lease are:

	LOT NO.	LOCATION	SIZE (sqm)	DESCRIPTION	MIN.BID
1	345 R 114	Sinapalo, Rota	960	House & Lot	150,000
2	Tr 22089-1-4	Mananana, Rota	929	Vacant	3,000
3	Tr 21769-3-4	Ginalangan, Rota	922.5	Vacant	1,500
4	Tr 21769-3-5	Ginalangan, Rota	922.5	Vacant	1,500
5	230 R 01	Tatgua, Rota	9,384.5	Vacant	75,000
6	Part of 3290-1	Linansa, Rota	5,000	Vacant	3,750
7	Part of 565 R 02	As Nieves, Rota	3,000	Vacant	14,700
8	Tr 21769-R2-3	Ginalangan, Rota	900	Vacant	2,800
9	Tr 21769-R2-4	Ginalangan, Rota	850	Vacant	2,400
10	Tr 22675-6	Talafofo, Saipan	5,016	Vacant	40,000
11	Tr 22675-7	Talafofo, Saipan	5,016	Vacant	40,000
12	Tr 22675-8	Talafofo, Saipan	5,016	Vacant	40,000
13	Tr 22675-9	Talafofo, Saipan	5,017	Vacant	40,000
14	Tr 22675-10	Talafofo, Saipan	5,017	Vacant	40,000
15	Tr 22675-11	Talafofo, Saipan	5,017	Vacant	40,000
16	Tr 22675-R3	Talafofo, Saipan	5,016	Vacant	40,000
17	Tr 21837-3 New-4, Tr 21837-3 New-2 Tr 21837-3 New-1	As Lito, Saipan	3,000 750 1,286	Vacant	40,000
18	278-6	I-Denni, Saipan	929	Vacant	15,500
19	278-11	I-Denni, Saipan	929	Vacant	15,500
20	278-12	I-Denni, Saipan	929	Vacant	14,000
21	Tr 22805-1-4	As Teo, Saipan	2,241	Vacant	20,000
22	004 I 05	San Antonio, Saipan	479	House & Lot	50,000
23	131 T 31	Marpo, Tinian	1,322	House & Lot	50,000
24	251 T 52 & 53	Marpo Valley, Tinian	7,571	Vacant	50,000
25	031 T 19	Tachungya, Tinian	1,085	Vacant	21,700
26	031 T 20	Tachungya, Tinian	1,080	Vacant	21,600
27	031 T 21	Tachungya, Tinian	1,080	Vacant	21,600
28	031 T 22	Tachungya, Tinian	1,089	Vacant	21,780
29	031 T 23	Tachungya, Tinian	1,089	Vacant	21,780

The following terms and conditions apply:

Fee Simple

1. The purchase price shall not be less than the listed Minimum Bid price.
2. A non-refundable deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid upon award by cash, cashier's check or credit card (Visa or Mastercard), with the remaining balance due within ten (10) business days of the award.
3. Failure to make timely payment of the remaining balance will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the ten percent (10%) deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in the property will automatically revert back to CDA.
4. A quitclaim deed will be given upon full payment of the purchase price.

Leasehold

1. The Lease Price shall not be less than the listed Minimum Bid price.
2. An up-front payment of five percent (5%) of the Lease Price must be paid upon award by cash, cashier's check or credit card (Visa or Mastercard).
3. The balance of the Lease Price shall accrue interest at five percent (5%) per annum.
4. Monthly payments of the Lease will be considered rental payments only and not installments toward purchase and shall not grant the lessee any equity or ownership interest in the property or be construed in any way to encumber CDA's rights, title and interest in the property beyond the granting of a lease for a specific term of years.
5. Maximum acceptable Lease term shall be fifteen (15) years or 180 months.
6. A lease agreement will be given upon receipt of the up-front payment and shall include:
 - a. No alterations or improvements without the prior written consent of CDA.
 - b. Lessee to insure property and improvements during the Lease term.
 - c. Lessee responsible for all utilities and other charges associated with the property.
 - d. Lease not to be assigned or mortgaged without prior written consent of CDA.
 - e. Failure to make a monthly payment grounds for termination and eviction.
 - f. Lease may, at the request of lessee, contain an Option to Purchase provision exercisable upon: (i) payment in full of the Lease Price; (ii) the Lease not having been declared to be in default; and (iii) payment of \$100.00 option consideration. If the option is properly exercised, a quitclaim deed will be given.

Fee Simple & Leasehold

1. Interested bidders and buyers are cautioned to inspect the title and property. The interests of CDA in the property are being sold "AS IS" and without warranty. Failure to inspect the real property or improvements or any related documents will not constitute a ground for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer or lessee.
2. CDA reserves the following rights:
 - a. To withdraw any or all of the listed properties before sale or lease or before a bid for such property is accepted, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and
 - b. To reject any and all bids or proposals.

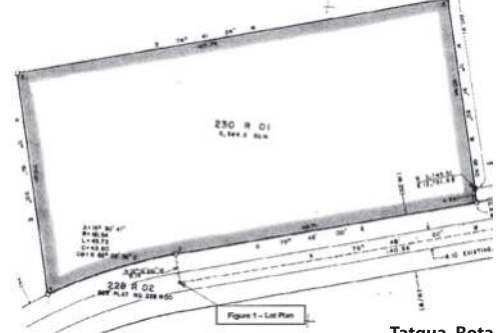
Interested parties or persons may contact Oscar C. Camacho, CDA Loan Manager, at 234-6245 ext. 306 for further information or to inspect properties, appraisals or photos.

All bids and offers for lease or purchase must be submitted to CDA in a sealed envelope marked "FORECLOSED PROPERTY SALE" no later than **10:00 am, Thursday, March 29, 2012**. The bids and offers will be opened and evaluated by CDA's Comptroller with recommendations being made to CDA's Executive Director for final decision. In the event of competing bids or offers, CDA reserves its sole right to determine which bid or offer is most advantageous to CDA. Price, fee simple vs. leasehold, term and up-front payment are all factors to be considered.

The acceptance or selection of any bids or offers will be announced on **Friday, March 30, 2012 at 2:00 pm** at CDA's Conference Room, Gualo Rai, Saipan.



Talafofo, Saipan



Tatgua, Rota



San Antonio, Saipan

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Sanctions put increasing pressure on Tehran

The end-game in the Iranian nuclear crisis is rushing forward.

The differences between President Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over Iran, principally questions of timing and tactics, have been well publicized. But last week Obama cleared the air by stating more explicitly than ever that the two nations share the objective of ensuring that Iran does not acquire nuclear weapons capability and that he means what he says.

Specifically, President Obama told an interviewer that he was willing to use a "military component" against Iran as a last resort if talks and persuasion don't work. "I don't bluff," he added. This is tough talk for a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize leading a war-weary nation. He followed that up with a speech to a major pro-Israeli lobbying group in Washington in which he ruled out a policy of "containment," the defensive posture adopted with the Soviet Union after it became a nuclear power.

That narrows the options to one: prevention. Iran's mullahs cannot fail to understand what this means. The upcoming round of talks with Western nations represents Iran's last chance to show that it is a rational nation-state whose leaders realize they've exhausted the patience of law-abiding countries. They can no longer violate the rules of nuclear non-proliferation and expect to get away with it.

For years, the ayatollahs have engaged in a dangerous game, using subterfuge, double-talk and bluster to build a secret nuclear program while reassuring suspicious critics that their intentions were peaceful.

Why should anyone believe them? The regime has eagerly nurtured terrorist movements in the Middle East and elsewhere around the world. It has refused to cooperate with international arms inspectors. Prime Minister Mahmoud Ahmadinejad regularly taunts and disparages Western leaders and threatens harm to Iran's critics.

Critics of U.S. policy believe too much time has been lost in idle diplomacy. But rushing to war is always a mistake. A steady U.S. naval buildup around the Persian Gulf, coupled with sanctions that make it harder for Iran to refine its oil and stay connected to the world financial system, has put pressure on the regime. This approach has persuaded other nations to form an effective, united front against Iran.

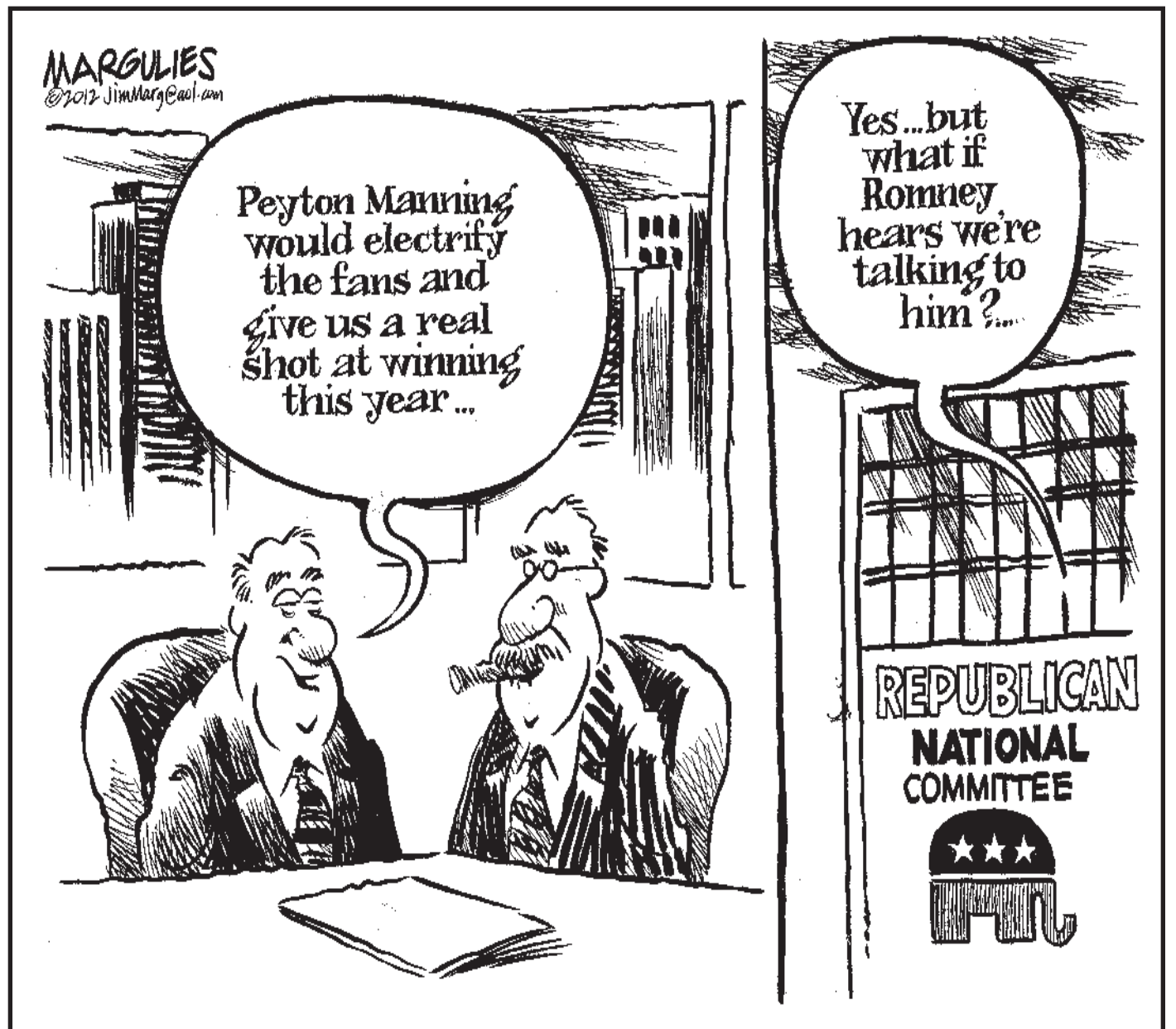
The clearest example lies in France's change of attitude. The country famously refused to join in the invasion of Iraq. This time French President Nicolas Sarkozy is leading the charge. He was the first among leaders of the six powers negotiating with Iran to push for tighter sanctions on Iranian oil and finance. His foreign minister says Iran continues to be "two-faced" and insincere. Translation: We won't be fooled again.

Iran cannot say it has not been warned. Negotiators should not settle for yet another invitation to have international inspectors visit Iran without a guarantee of satisfaction. The last mission, in February, failed after Iran's leaders blithely refused to address the key concerns of inspectors.

Israel has been right to insist that the international community face up to its duty to confront Iran. Armed with nuclear weapons, a rogue nation that actively supports terrorism represents a menace to all, not just to Israel.

Years ago, Israel did the world a favor by taking out Saddam Hussein's nuclear facility, and later Syria's. Iran is everyone's responsibility. The end game is near and the clock is ticking.

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When tsunami struck, an ages-old warning kicked in

By JOSÉ HOLGUÍN-VERAS
LOS ANGELES TIMES

I am an engineer and a disaster researcher; I went to Japan after the March 11, 2011, magnitude 9.0 Tohoku earthquake to try to identify lessons there that could benefit future disaster-response operations.

In late May, I was following the usual research routine of interviewing individuals involved at the various stages of the disaster response, and particularly those involved in the distribution of critical supplies as part of the relief effort.

In a refugee center on the beautiful island of Miyatojima, at the entrance to Matsushima Bay, I stumbled on a story that, by its reach back in time, taught me something unexpected: Collective memory, as much as science and engineering, may save your life.

After a long day of field work, my colleagues and I were chatting with a community leader, Koutaro Ogata, from a fishing village called Murohama. We asked what had happened to him in the moments after the earthquake. He told us that he and his neighbors were well aware that a large earthquake would generate a large tsunami and they knew, particularly, what to do because "a thousand years ago" a massive earthquake and tsunami had all but wiped out Murohama.

This is the story he told. A millennium ago, the residents of Murohama, knowing they were going to be inundated, had sought safety on the village's closest hill. But they had entered into a deadly trap. A second wave, which had reached the interior of the island through an inlet, was speeding over the rice paddies from the opposite direction. The waves collided at the hill and killed those who had taken refuge there. To signify their grief and to advise future generations, the survivors erected a shrine.

This story might not have captured my attention if it hadn't been for a fortuitous coincidence. The day before, an engineering colleague, Eiichi Taniguchi, had told me that researchers at Tohoku University in Sendai, Japan, had found sediments indicating that a huge tsunami had hit Miyatojima about 1,000 years ago. Intrigued by the possibility of a connection between oral history and geological evidence, I asked the community leader if "a thousand years ago" was a figure of speech or an

estimate of time.

To my astonishment, he indicated that it was in no way a figure of speech. Village elders had reviewed the local temple's records and found reports pinpointing a large tsunami 1,142 years ago. It was most likely the result of the massive Jogan Jishin earthquake of 869, which devastated the Sanriku coast. Thirty years before the great Mayan cities were abandoned, at the height of the Muslim and Chinese empires, when Europe was in the midst of the Early Middle Ages (and 600 years before Columbus stumbled into the Americas), a community of unknown fishermen honored their dead and successfully sent a warning to future generations.

Some 50 generations later, on March 11, 2011, the Murohama tsunami warning tower—which was supposed to sound an alarm—was silent, toppled by the temblor. Still, without the benefit of an official warning system supported by modern science, the locals relied on the lesson that had been transmitted generation to generation for 1,000 years. "We all know the story about the two tsunami waves that collided at the shrine," I was told.

Instead of taking refuge on the closest hill, the one with the shrine, they took the time to get to high ground farther away. From the safety of their vantage point they saw two tsunami waves colliding at the hill with the shrine, as they did long ago. Tragically, not everyone made the right choice; I was told of at least one person who died.

Later, I saw the shrine—a simple clearing by the side of a hillside road, with stone tablets and roughly made figures—and I heard the old story and the new one again: A community remembered what it had been told and did the right thing.

I have to admit that I have not been able to keep this story of survival out of my mind. I know that science and engineering save lives. But in this instance neither did much to help. A message sent into the future 1,000 years ago did. Reaching out from the distant past, long-gone ancestors—and a deeply embedded story—saved their children.

Jose Holguin-Veras is an engineering professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York and a member of the National Academy of Sciences' Disaster Research Roundtable. Jason Kelly contributed to this essay. It was written for the Los Angeles Times.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Viewpoints

By JOSEPH ITO PANGELINAN
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Second of a three-part series

Editor's Note: Due to the length of this submission, it is being published as a three-part series. The last part of the series will be published on Friday.

I write this with the belief that both proponents and opponents can and should freely express their opinions respectfully and with open minds. This allows the public an opportunity to make an informed decision based on healthy debate of the issues and facts surrounding the question of whether to keep or abolish Article 12.

VIEWPOINT 2: We need Article 12 to protect the poor uneducated NMDs from being landless.

Although this viewpoint is inherently offensive in suggesting we are poor and uneducated, and therefore we should not be allowed to make *our own personal decisions* about *our own land*, it is important to address it. This viewpoint is important, because it's one of those that plays to emotion more than reason. I too will play to your emotions, but I will use reason to show you the intrinsic flaws of this viewpoint. I will show you that the reasons given for protecting Article 12 are exactly the reasons we should eliminate it.

When Article 12 was introduced and accepted 25 years ago, we were a young, naïve government. My generation's parents were lucky to have had a 6th grade education, and barely spoke or understood English (Japanese and Chamorro and Carolinian being the native tongues of their time). This is no reflection on our parents being uneducated by choice, but a reflection of the time our parents were living in. They survived World War II and were under Japanese rule, allowed only a limited education. As a people, we had never truly been given the opportunity to govern ourselves for literally centuries (under Spanish, German, and Japanese rule from the early 1500's to the late 1900's).

For many of us, our generation is the first English speaking and higher education generation. Article 12 was important and the right thing to implement 25 years ago, because of the nature of the inexperience we had as a people governing ourselves. Those concerns and days are over now. We have had 25 years of experience, and know what it means to own land and to sell land. We know and appreciate the value of land, now probably more so because of the 25-year hold

Article 12 has provided us. Our children are graduates from some of the best schools in the world—Stanford, Georgetown, MIT, to name a few. Our children and people of my generation are accomplished lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers, accountants, policewomen, and leaders in many fields and parts of our community. We have grown and accomplished tremendous milestones, exceeding average to being truly exceptional. No one can deny this.

Yes, there are poor and uneducated among us still, and as with every community this is a community problem and concern. It is real, and I acknowledge this completely. The error in the analysis is claiming that Article 12 helps to protect the few poor and uneducated NMDs. I take it a step further and will show you how Article 12 actually hurts *most especially* the poor and uneducated NMDs in the context of the Commonwealth today after 25 years of much needed but sufficient experience with Article 12.

Landlessness and poverty still occur with Article 12. I dare claim it is worse now than when we had the “economic boom” days of non-stop tourism and garment factories. At least during the “boom” period, NMDs were making hundreds of thousands and even millions of dollars leasing their land. Article 12 did not hinder land value back then the way it does today. Today's world economy is a completely different one, with free trade demolishing our garment industry and the weak world economy bringing less tourists. Nobody can deny this is a FACT. Yet there are still those considered poor, uneducated families who leased or sold their lands and have squandered all their money away without investing for their future. Article 12 throughout the years did not force the unwise to make wise decisions. We cannot legislate wise decisions. So should we continue to use these same reasons to keep Article 12 when the very harms that we are supposedly being protected from still occur under the Article 12 mandate?

We have read in the newspapers of young NMD couples with children and families who have invested their lifetime savings in a home, only to be foreclosed because of a job lost, austerity in government or medical needs and emergency. These owners may have had a chance of recovering their investments if the pool of buyers were opened without restrictions to NMDs only. They would have been able to receive some money to start a new life here, Hawaii, Guam, or someplace in the States. Instead, they are saddled with deficiencies that they cannot escape, short of declaring bankruptcy.

The irony of these foreclosed transactions is that only an NMD buyer could buy and own the foreclosed property. The foreclosed NMD owner still loses his land. So who is being protected in the land transactions under Article 12, the NMD buyer or the NMD seller? The NMD buyer is not going to give back the land to the

NMD seller. The NMD buyer will probably turn around and lease the seller's land to a non-NMD citizen. Is this process protecting all NMDs? Who is the NMD we are trying to protect under the guise of protecting our culture and land for all NMDs?

NMD sellers should be given the opportunity to get the maximum benefit for their land. The *truth* is that only the select few privileged NMDs benefit from Article 12, because they can purchase homes and land from desperate poor and possibly uneducated NMD landowners at ridiculous discounts, due to land value being so low because the market of buyers is, by law through Article 12, non-existent outside of NMD people. Furthermore, the buyer pool is even smaller than a puddle because not all NMDs can afford to buy land, so it again only benefits the select few and privileged NMDs. NMD sellers should have the opportunity and right to sell their land to whoever they want to regardless of NMD definitions—they should have the opportunity to get the most money for their land, especially if selling out of desperate measure to save themselves from bankruptcy, medical emergency costs, higher education costs, etc., for the betterment of their families. The FACT is in the end, that NMD is still going to be poor, possibly uneducated and now landless, but for way less money than what they could have had if not for the Article 12 restrictions.

The landowners that are being foreclosed by MIHA (now Northern Marianas Housing Corp.) might have had the opportunity to avoid the foreclosure process if Article 12 had not been the impediment. They would have been able to sell their property at a greater amount than the balance of the loan and the accrued interests if there had been a bigger pool of buyers. The Northern Marianas Housing Corp. is now saddled into paying off the federal government who were the lenders under a loan guaranteed program for low-income landowners. The program was made available to help NMDs build affordable housing for their families. The guaranteed loan was agreed to because of Article 12. If it wasn't for Article 12, the loan program would have been administered independently by the federal government without the MIHA guarantee, and MIHA would have been in a better position to continue to help the homeless. Sadly, this was not possible because of Article 12. The same is true for the Veterans Loan Program. Our NMD veterans who want to come back and make this their home, cannot access a loan program that they are entitled to because of Article 12.

Again, who is Article 12 protecting in this case? Stop and think and look around.

Joseph Ito Pangelinan describes himself as 50-percent Northern Marianas descent by true blood but 100-percent NMD by definition.

Letters to the Editor

Social, personal impact of Article 12

Last week there were two articles on the paper about Article 12. One of them was rather lengthy and stated that Article 12 has nothing to do with the economy. I do not agree with this statement and believe that Article 12, especially now, plays a critical role in hampering economic growth. I will talk about this in the future.

In this article, I will focus on the social and personal aspects of what Article 12 has done, is doing, and will continue to do. In fact, it will get worse in the future if Article 12 is to remain. No modifications to Article 12 will satisfactorily address all possible cases.

Let us take adoption. Under Article 12, if NMD parents adopt a child under the age of 18 from anywhere in the world, that child will become 100 percent NMD. Under these terms, the adopted child that has absolutely no Chamorro or Carolinian blood now becomes full NMD with all its rights and privileges.

However, children born of a 100 percent NMD but adopted by a non-NMD or a percentage NMD will take the status of his or her adopted parents. There is at least one person that I know of that is 100 percent NMD but because one of the adopting parents is a non-NMD, Article 12 says that that 100 percent NMD child will now be only 50 percent.

How can this be? There are talks of reducing the blood quantum required from the current 25 percent to the lowest possible value with the court possibly making the final decision. Why in the first place must one spend time and money to defend one's identity as an NMD? Incidentally, will DNA be required? What is the cost of a DNA test? As time goes by, our bloodline will be much more diluted as many of us will be marrying non-NMD. This is a fact of life. The world has gotten smaller in that we are free to travel, meet other people, and seek other opportunities. This is happening now.

One sure way to hold on to NMD status is not to marry anyone but another NMD. There is nothing wrong with that. It is after all a

very personal choice. However, take a look around. There are many diverse families among us. The number of 100 percent NMD will continue to decrease as time goes by. We can learn a lot from our youth who are comfortable with NMD and non-NMD alike. Are we a community that wants laws that discriminate among the people that become our family?

Under Article 12, a husband and wife with one being a non-NMD and working together to acquire properties will have no problem giving the non-NMD full property rights if he/she passes away but *only if there are no children*. If there are children in the marriage and the NMD spouse passes away then the non-NMD cannot be considered an NMD and own land fee simple of the very properties the NMD and non-NMD spouse worked together to acquire. Is this what marriage is? I do not believe it is fair nor in agreement of what marriage is about. Again, does our community really want to have laws that discriminate in this way?

What I have learned through my involvement in the Citizens for Change to Article 12 and that still continues to make an impression on me is that the intent of Article 12 was to give people time to become more sophisticated in terms of land value and land transactions.

I think it is safe to say that Article 12 has served its purpose. The time has come to acknowledge that private landowners are capable of deciding what to do with their land. In addition, our island community has changed so much since the inception of Article 12 and the circumstances and reasons why NMD landowners want to sell their land are just as varied. No law, including Article 12, can address the different circumstances that private landowners find themselves in and the reasons they may have to sell their land. Just as importantly, should the law dictate to whom the private landowner can give ownership of their land to? Should a law tell an NMD

landowner that they cannot leave their land to their spouse? Laws are created and abolished to serve the interests of the majority of the community affected by them. Clearly, the right and just action is to abolish Article 12.

I welcome comments from the community. As I stated at the beginning of this article I will write about Article 12 and how it affects our economy. In addition, I will share my thoughts about Article 12 and culture.

Efrain F. Camacho
Navy Hill, Saipan

Be professional

As a citizen of Rota, I do not agree with you calling the people of Rota and Tinian stupid. As you may know that as the highest office holder, I cannot believe that such person will be the one to use such language.

Isn't it all the people of the three islands voted for you and now you are describing them as stupid. How dare you use such a word. Be a professional officeholder because we look up to you to lead the CNMI in a way that will bring better living.

You have hurt our feelings and being the governor indicating that you will make the people of Rota and Tinian suffer, isn't it that we are one commonwealth and one.

We took part also in voting you into office. For the casino bill, let the people of Saipan decide on such initiative not you.

The people put you in office. Do not dictate what they one but give them the chance to make such a decision.






If they don't want any casino on Saipan then why not encourage investors to invest on Rota and Tinian since they already have casinos. Again, be a professional governor and lead the people of the CNMI in a way that will be best for them.

Dexter Apatang
Sinapalo, Rota

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
				
Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 85° ▼ 76°	▲ 85° ▼ 76°	▲ 85° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thundershowers	▲ 86 ▼ 77
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲ 85 ▼ 79
Yap	Showers	▲ 89 ▼ 78
Chuuk	Showers	▲ 90 ▼ 79
Pohnpei	Showers	▲ 86 ▼ 80
Kosrae	Showers	▲ 86 ▼ 80
Majuro	Showers	▲ 86 ▼ 79

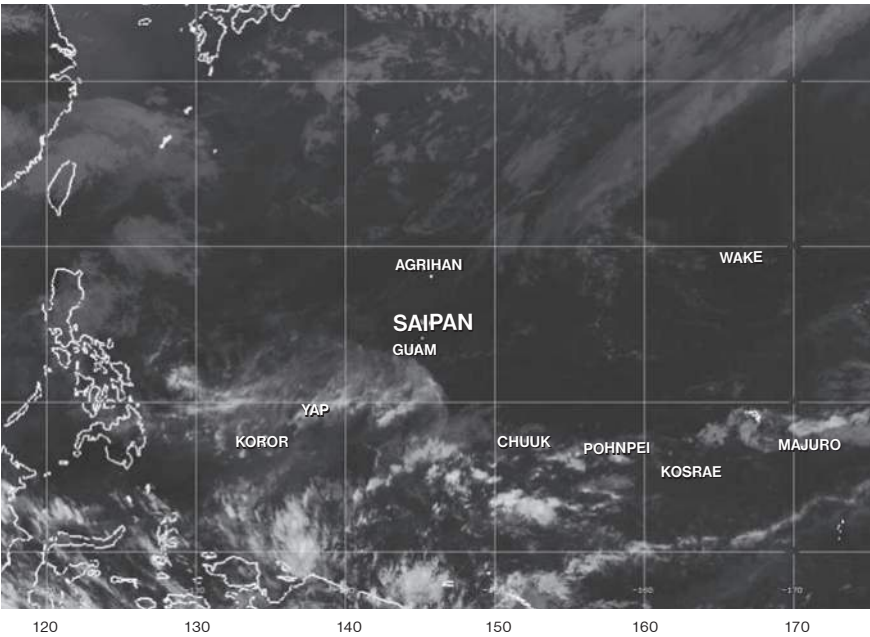
Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲ 70 ▼ 66
Beijing	Cloudy	▲ 51 ▼ 32
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	▲ 69 ▼ 64
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲ 77 ▼ 70
London	Showers	▲ 58 ▼ 45
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲ 66 ▼ 46
Manila	Thundershowers	▲ 88 ▼ 80
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 73 ▼ 57
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲ 80 ▼ 68
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲ 67 ▼ 48
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 51 ▼ 38
Paris	Showers	▲ 57 ▼ 43
Pusan	Cloudy	▲ 57 ▼ 42
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲ 66 ▼ 46
Salem	Showers	▲ 53 ▼ 37
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 59 ▼ 47
Seoul	Cloudy	▲ 51 ▼ 32
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲ 56 ▼ 40
Washington, DC	Showers	▲ 73 ▼ 51

Tides

Saipan Harbor				
3:07 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet	
8:08 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet	
1:11 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet	
9:03 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet	

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2012
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line curves southwestward from 25N161E across the northern CNMI to end west of Guam at 13N140E. Scattered showers are found along and up to 150 miles northwest of this boundary east of 152E. Low-level convergence is producing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms south of Koror and Yap south of a line from 4N132E to 5N141E and near Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Majuro within 150 miles of a line from 6N147E to 6N159E to 11N180.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:25 AM	6:27 PM
Friday	6:24 AM	6:27 PM
Saturday	6:23 AM	6:27 PM
Sunday	6:23 AM	6:28 PM
Monday	6:22 AM	6:28 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	12:23 AM	11:58 AM
Friday	1:19 AM	12:57 PM
Saturday	2:12 AM	1:54 PM
Sunday	3:00 AM	2:48 PM
Monday	3:44 AM	3:41 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

- PICTURES**
 - ISLAND SNAPSHOTS Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
 - BIRTHDAY GREETINGS A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
 - BUSINESS Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
 - SAMUT SARI Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
 - TRAVELOGUE Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.
- ANNOUNCEMENTS**
 - COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
■ **CAMPUS BULLETIN** Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- For pictures:**
- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
 - Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
 - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
 - Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
 - For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.
- For announcements:**
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.
■ Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 11, 2012

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP) C05062 2:10am 2:40am 1, 5	ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM) C05064 5:15am 5:45am 1, 5
SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP) C05064 4:15am 4:50am 1, 5	ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN) C05062 3:10am 3:45am 1, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM) C05064 4:15am 5:45am 1, 5 via ROP C05070 4:35am 5:25am 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 C05068 8:25am 9:15am Daily C05074 12:10pm 1:00pm 1, 4, 5, 7 C05076 3:10pm 4:00pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05078 6:50pm 7:40pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05078 7:00pm 7:50pm 3, 6 C05072 9:55pm 10:45pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05072 10:05pm 10:55pm 3, 6	GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN C05062 2:10am 3:45am 1, 5 via ROP C05069 2:45am 3:35am 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 C05071 7:00am 7:50am Daily C05073 10:05am 10:55am 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05075 1:40pm 2:30pm 1, 4, 5, 7 C05077 5:30pm 6:20pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05077 5:40pm 6:30pm 3, 6 C05079 8:35pm 9:25pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05079 8:45pm 9:35pm 3, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT) DL287 6:00am 8:40am Daily DL285 6:35am 9:15am 1, 3, 5, 7 DL297 4:25pm 7:15pm Daily	NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN DL298 10:25am 3:00pm Daily DL288 8:40pm 1:15am+1 Daily DL286 7:40pm 12:20am+1 2, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX) OZ119 4:00am 6:40am Daily	OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN OZ120 9:50pm 2:20am+1 Daily
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN) OZ606 2:10am 6:00am 1 OZ606 2:40am 6:30am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 OZ119 4:00am 11:20am Daily via KIX OZ604 3:20pm 7:10pm Daily	SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN OZ603 9:00am 2:20pm Daily OZ120 7:10pm 2:20am+1 Daily via KIX OZ605 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 OZ605 8:10pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS) OZ608 3:35am 7:05am 4, 7 DL581 4:10am 7:30am 1, 5	BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN OZ607 9:00pm 2:20am+1 3, 6 DL580 10:10pm 2:55am+1 4, 7
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN) 3U8646 4:20am 7:30am 2, 6	GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN 3U8645 7:40pm 3:00am+1 1, 5
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG) 3U8648 6:10am 8:40am 1, 4, 5, 7	SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN 3U8647 10:40pm 5:00am+1 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL) OZ606/701 2:10am 11:15am 1 via ICN OZ606/701 2:40am 11:15am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN C05070/191 4:35am 9:45am 3, 6 via GUM DL287/173 6:00am 10:25pm Daily via NRT C05068/183 8:25am 9:25pm 2, 5 via GUM C05068/183 8:25am 9:40pm 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM C05076/183 3:10pm 9:25pm 2, 5 via GUM C05076/183 3:10pm 9:40pm 1, 4, 7 via GUM C05076/193 3:10pm 11:00pm 2, 5 via GUM-Palau OZ604/703 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN C05072/PR111 9:55pm 7:50am+1 1, 5, 7 via GUM C05072/PR111 10:05pm 7:50am+1 3, 6 via GUM	MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN DL172/288 8:00am 1:15am+1 Daily via NRT C0190/5077 10:55am 6:30pm 3, 6 via GUM C0190/5079 10:55am 9:35pm 3, 6 via GUM OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN PR110/C05071 10:15pm 7:50am+1 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM C0192/5071 10:25pm 7:50am+1 2, 5 via GUM-Palau C0184/5071 11:10pm 7:50am+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM OZ704/603 11:40pm 2:20pm Daily via ICN C0184/5071 11:59pm 7:50am+1 2, 5 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG) OZ606/721 2:10am 12:00pm 1 via ICN OZ606/721 2:40am 12:00pm 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN C05076/147 3:10pm 10:25pm 1, 5 via GUM OZ604/723 3:20pm 10:30pm Daily via ICN OZ604/749 3:20pm 10:50pm Daily via ICN	HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN OZ724/603 12:30am 2:20pm Daily via ICN OZ750/603 1:00am 2:20pm Daily via ICN OZ722/605 1:15pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ722/605 1:15pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN C0180/5071 11:15pm 7:50am+1 1, 5 via GUM
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 5K: FlyGuam; 3U: Sichuan Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana	
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The <i>Saipan Tribune</i> is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)	

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily	FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily	FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
Guam-Rota				FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily	FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan							
FRE 1750	17:50	18:20	Daily	Tinian-Saipan			
Saipan-Rota				FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily	FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily	FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily	FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily	FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily	FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily	FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily	FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily	FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Business

Obama warns China against 'skirting the rules'

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama warned China Tuesday that it would not be allowed to gain a competitive advantage in world trade by "skirting the rules."

Making an election-year pitch to American workers, and businesses as well, Obama announced Washington has brought a new trade case against Beijing. The goal is to pressure China, a rising Asian economic power, to end its restrictions on exports of key materials used to

manufacture hybrid car batteries, flat screen televisions and other high tech-goods.

"If China would simply let the market work on its own, we'd have no objection," Obama said during remarks in the White House Rose Garden. "But their policies currently are preventing that from happening. And they go against the very rules that China agreed to follow."

The U.S., working in conjunction with the European Union and Japan, asked the

World Trade Organization Tuesday to facilitate talks with China over its curtailment of exports of what's known as rare earth minerals. Obama cast the fresh action against China as part of a broader push to level the playing field for U.S. companies.

"When it is necessary, I will take action if our workers and our businesses are being subjected to unfair practices," Obama said.

With the U.S. economy slowly recovering from recession, Obama has sought to bring a

renewed focus on Chinese policies that could hinder U.S. expansion. He used an executive order last month to create a new trade enforcement agency—the Interagency Trade Enforcement Center—to move aggressively against China and other nations.

Obama's posture on China has already surfaced as an election-year issue, with Republican front-runner Mitt Romney criticizing him for refusing so far to cite China for manipulating its

currency. Romney has said he would label China a currency manipulator on his first day in office, a move that could lead to trade sanctions against Beijing.

The White House insisted that Tuesday's announcement was not intended to be a counter to Republican criticism.

"The president's commitment on this has been evident from the very beginning, and this is simply part of that effort," White House spokesman Jay

Carney said.

China has a stranglehold on the global supply of 17 rare earth minerals that are essential for making high-tech goods, including hybrid cars, weapons, flat-screen TVs, mobile phones, mercury-vapor lights, smartphones and camera lenses. The materials also are used in the manufacture of tiny motors, such as those used to raise and lower car windows and in consumer electronics.

Fed upbeat on economy but will keep record rates

WASHINGTON (AP)—The job market's gains may endure. Record-low interest rates will, too.

Those signals emerged Tuesday from the Federal Reserve after its latest policy meeting. The Fed sketched a slightly sunnier view than it did in January, when it announced a plan to hold short-term rates near zero through 2014 to help the economy.

Since then, a stream of reports has pointed to a steadily strengthening economy. Employers have added more than a half million jobs. Retail spending has picked up. Even the housing market is stirring.

Yet few expect the Fed to drop its plan to keep short-term rates near zero for nearly three more years. Not anytime soon.

A pullback from that timetable could jolt investors. As long as inflation stays tame, analysts say, the Fed will likely decide to

hold rates down if it feels they're still helping the economy.

Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, said the core question for the Fed isn't whether the economy is strengthening. Rather, it must decide whether the gains might falter, as they have at times since the recession ended in June 2009.

For now, the Fed isn't announcing any new steps to boost the economy. But it isn't ruling them out, either.

"Despite the better economic numbers, the Fed remains very nervous about the economy's prospects," Zandi said. "I would do exactly what the Fed is doing. I would keep all of my options open. Things could go badly wrong."

Some Fed-watchers note that Chairman Ben Bernanke needs to be cautious. Better for him to have underestimated the econo-

my's strength than to have overestimated it. Bernanke can always point later to the Fed's low-rate policies as having worked better than even he expected.

Most of all, the Fed doesn't want to withdraw its help for the economy prematurely.

"The Fed is lagging behind the better economic news," said David Jones, chief economist at DMJ Advisors and the author of several books on the central bank. "They are erring on the side of being too pessimistic to be sure that they are providing sufficient support for the economy."

At the same time, Jones said that if the strengthening economy were to ignite runaway inflation, the Fed might have to raise rates much sooner than late 2014 to cool growth. Doing so might fan criticism of the Fed, he said. It could also cause interest rates to jump and stock prices to fall.



A Chinese woman makes a call from a public phone near food vendors on a street of Beijing, China, Monday, March 12, 2012.

Bank surge sends Dow to highest level since 2007

NEW YORK (AP)—The Dow Jones industrial average is at its highest level since 2007 after a day of encouraging signs for the economy: Retail sales were strong, the Federal Reserve was optimistic and most of the nation's biggest banks got a clean bill of health.

The Dow surged nearly 218 points, its biggest gain of the year. The Nasdaq composite index also reached a milestone, closing above 3,000 for the first time since December 2000.

Stocks started Tuesday higher, and momentum built throughout the day.

The government reported before the market opened that retail sales in February increased the most since September. Shortly after 2 p.m., the Federal Reserve said it expected the unemployment rate to keep falling.

Then, at about 3 p.m., JPMorgan Chase said it was raising its dividend and launching a \$15 billion stock buyback program,

all with the blessing of the Fed.

The Fed was planning on waiting until Thursday to release the results of its annual "stress tests" on banks, which determine which are healthy enough to raise their dividends. After JPMorgan's announcement, the Fed released the results early.

The Fed's action was the latest sign that the U.S. financial system was getting healthier. JPMorgan led the Dow higher, shooting up 7 percent. Other big banks including Bank of America, Goldman Sachs and Wells Fargo also gained 6 percent.

"That's what really made the day," said Jeffrey Kleintop, chief market strategist at LPL Financial. Banks were easily the best-performing stocks in the market, gaining almost 4 percent as a group.

The Fed's test results had some negative outcomes, too. While JPMorgan Chase and 14 other financial institutions passed, four, including Citi-

group, failed. Citigroup stock was down 4 percent in after-hours trading following the Fed announcement.

The Dow finished at 13,177.68, its highest close since Dec. 31, 2007. The close put the Dow within 1,000 points of its record, 14,164.53, set less than three months earlier. All 30 stocks in the Dow closed higher, the first time that has happened this year.

The Nasdaq composite index rose 56.22 points, or 1.9 percent, to 3,039.88.

On Dec. 11, 2000, the last time the Nasdaq closed above 3,000, it was in the middle of a horrifying slide—from a peak above 5,000 in March 2000 to just above 1,100 in October 2002.

At the beginning of 2000, the peak of the dot-com frenzy, investors valued stocks in the Nasdaq composite index at an astronomical 175 times their per-share earnings over the previous year.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Oil hovers below \$107 after US crude supply jump

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil prices hovered below \$107 a barrel Wednesday in Asia after a report showed a jump in U.S. crude supplies, a sign demand remains sluggish. Benchmark oil for April delivery was down 3 cents to \$106.68 at midday Singapore time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract rose 37 cents to settle at \$106.71 per barrel in New York on Tuesday. Brent crude was steady at \$126.22 per barrel in London.

Students seek to stop loan interest rate hike

WASHINGTON (AP)—Millions of college students could be in for a shock this summer when the interest rate on a popular federally subsidized student loan doubles unless Congress acts. College students on Tuesday delivered more than 130,000 letters to congressional leaders asking them to stop rates from increasing from 3.4 to 6.8 percent. The rate hike affects new subsidized Stafford loans, which are issued to low and middle income undergraduates. They hope to raise enough

awareness to get Congress to stop it. "I will be put back into buying a house and saving up for my expenses later on in life, and life as we know, is very unexpected. Adding that variable definitely limits my ability to be successful," said Tyler Dowden, 18, a freshman at Northern Arizona University who spoke at a press conference outside the Capitol before the letters were delivered in boxes with "Congress: Don't Double Student-Debt Rates" printed on the outside.

AT&T offers quiet settlement with iPhone user

NEW YORK (AP)—AT&T is offering to discuss a settlement to an iPhone user who won a small-claims case that alleged the company was slowing down his "unlimited" data service. In a letter dated Friday, a law firm retained by AT&T Inc. is threatening to shut off Matthew Spaccarelli's phone service if he doesn't sit down to talk. The phone company doesn't say if the settlement would involve money beyond the \$850 award the Simi Valley, Calif., resident won from the company in small claims court on Feb. 24.



LEADING INDICATORS

DOW

13,177.68
+217.97
+1.68%

S&P

1,377,97998
+6.89
+0.50%

NASDAQ

3,004.61
+20.95
+0.70%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	0.9496
British Pound	0.6381
Canadian Dollar	0.9898
Chinese Yuan	6.3374
Euro	0.766

Hong Kong Dollar	7.7613
Indian Rupee	49.8787
Indonesian Rupiah	9196.75
Japanese Yen	83.283
Malaysian Ringgit	3.0415
New Zealand Dollar	1.22

Philippine Peso	42.745
Singapore Dollar	1.2625
South Korean Won	1125.82
Swiss Franc	0.9262
Taiwan Dollar	29.5082
Thailand Baht	30.7

Nation

Santorum sweeps Alabama, Mississippi primaries

WASHINGTON (AP)—A resurgent Rick Santorum swept primaries in Alabama and Mississippi Tuesday night, upending the race for the Republican presidential nomination yet again and nudging Newt Gingrich toward the sidelines.

Mitt Romney was running third in both states.

"We did it again," Santorum told cheering supporters in Lafayette, La. He added, "Now is the time for conservatives to pull together" in an effort to defeat Romney, the former Massachusetts governor who still is the faraway leader in the delegate competition to pick an opponent to President Barack Obama in the fall.

In defeat, Romney issued a brief written statement congratulating the night's big winner but also saying, "I am pleased that we will be increasing our delegate count in a very substantial way after tonight." In the hours before the votes were counted, he had bristled that Santorum was "at the desperate end of his campaign."

While Romney must regroup, it was Gingrich with the most to lose as he struggled for political survival in a part of the country he hoped would fuel one more comeback in the unpredictable race.

Appearing before supporters in Birmingham, Ala., Gingrich twice referred to remaining in the marathon contest. But he was unusually complimentary toward



Republican presidential candidate, former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum speaks during his election night party, Tuesday, March 13, 2012, in Lafayette, La.

Santorum, a contrast to pokes at Romney. "If you're the front-runner and you keep coming in third, you're not much of a front-runner," he said.

It is rare for Alabama and Mississippi to play an important role in a Republican nominating campaign, but the 2012 race has gone on far longer than usual. Equally improbable was the decision by Santorum and Romney to campaign in the next few days in Puerto Rico, which holds a primary on Sunday.

Illinois holds its primary next Tuesday, and already Romney's super PAC was advertising there in hopes of giving him an

advantage.

Evangelicals played an outsized role in both of Tuesday's primary states, underscoring the challenge Romney had faced in the Southern primaries.

In Mississippi and Alabama, 80 percent or more of voters leaving their polling places said they were born again Christians or evangelical. Those voters have been reluctant to rally to Romney's side in the primaries and caucuses to date. Among them, Santorum bested Romney by 9 points in Alabama and 4 points in Mississippi.

More broadly, the exit polls showed a primary electorate

that was conservative, determinedly Republican and profoundly unhappy about the government—a combination that will keep both states in the GOP column in the fall.

There were 107 Republican National Convention delegates at stake on Tuesday, 47 in Alabama, 37 in Mississippi, 17 in Hawaii caucuses and six more in caucuses in American Samoa.

Romney picked up all six delegates from American Samoa, plus the endorsement of three members of the Republican National Committee. The GOP caucus on the island 2,300 miles south of Hawaii was held

ELECTION 2012		
Mississippi, Alabama results		
As of 11 p.m. ET Tuesday		
Box denotes the projected winner		
Republicans	Ala.	Miss.
Rick Santorum	35%	33%
Newt Gingrich	29	31
Mitt Romney	28	30
Ron Paul	5	4
Precincts reporting	80%	97%
Source: AP © 2012 MCT		

Tuesday at Toa Bar & Grill in Pago Pago and about 70 people attended, with all nine delegates publicly backing Romney.

Last weekend, Romney captured all 18 delegates at caucuses in two other U.S. possessions in the Pacific—Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. Like American Samoa, residents there are U.S. citizens but not allowed to vote in presidential elections.

Santorum's two victories Tuesday were worth at least 29 delegates. Gingrich won at least 24 and Romney at least 31. The split underscored the difficulty that Romney's rivals face in overcoming his big lead.

ACROSS THE NATION

Taliban-linked Afghan convicted on drug charges

WASHINGTON (AP)—An Afghan man linked to the Taliban who was one of the largest heroin traffickers in the world was convicted Tuesday on charges of importing and distributing heroin and for narco-terrorism, federal officials said. Officials with the Justice Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration said Haji Bagcho was convicted by a federal jury in Washington. They say he manufactured the drug in secret laboratories along Afghanistan's border with Pakistan. According to the Justice Department, he sent heroin to more than 20 countries, including the United States, and proceeds from his heroin trafficking were then used to support high-level members of the Taliban to support their insurgency in Afghanistan.

State plan for Detroit finances would shift power

DETROIT (AP)—State officials aiming to put cash-strapped Detroit on a strict financial diet delivered an ultimatum Tuesday with a plan to shift political power, consolidate public utilities and shrink city staff and salaries. Detroit is facing cash flow problems and a \$197 million budget deficit.

The partial allocation of delegates from Tuesday's voting states left Romney with 485 in The Associated Press count, out of the 1,144 needed to win the nomination. Santorum had 246, Gingrich 131 and Paul 47.

That gave the former Massachusetts governor more than his rivals combined. And while Santorum in particular challenges the mathematical projections, Romney still is amassing delegates at a rate that puts him on track to clinch control of nomination before the convention next summer.

In Alabama Tuesday night, with 80 percent of the precincts counted, Santorum was pulling 35 percent of the vote, Gingrich had 29 percent and Romney 28 percent.

Returns from 93 percent of Mississippi's precincts showed Santorum with 33 percent, Gingrich 31 percent and Romney 30.

Rep. Ron Paul, the fourth contender, made little effort in the states on the day's ballot.

In Mississippi, more than eight in 10 voters said they were dissatisfied or angry with the federal government, while in Alabama, 80 percent said they would definitely vote for the Republican candidate against Obama next fall, no matter who he is.

Highs in 70s in March? Warm spell expected to last

CHICAGO (AP)—Break out the beach towels, flip-flops and baseball bats: Warm weather is arriving early across much of the U.S., even in northern states where perplexed residents are swapping their snow shovels for golf clubs.

The unseasonably warm weather was pushing throngs of people outside to play Tuesday from the Plains to New England, where March is feeling like May with temperatures ranging from the high 60s to low 80s—smashing dozens of record highs.

Boaters were cruising along the river in downtown Chicago amid one of Illinois' warmest winters on record. Golfers were smacking balls at a central Minnesota course that opened weeks earlier than last year.

And an ice-breaking mission on Maine's Kennebec River on Tuesday was the shortest in recent memory—because the Coast Guard found no ice.

"It's almost like we skipped winter and now we're going to skip spring, too," said Gino Izzi, a senior meteorologist at the National Weather Service's Chicago office.

Forecasters are predicting that temperatures will likely

remain unusually high through March.

Izzi said the weather pattern is a random but normal fluctuation. A jet stream moving north to south on the West Coast is pushing an opposite, seesaw effect in the rest of the nation. Atmospheric patterns, including the Pacific phenomenon known as La Nina, have kept cold air bottled up over Canada and contributed to the warmer winter in snow-accustomed parts of the continental U.S.

Tuesday's warm weather was raising some concerns, including upping the risk of wildfires. The usually warm, dry and windy conditions prompted six North Dakota counties to declare fire emergencies and institute burn bans.

Another effect of rising temperatures: Americans' belief in global warming, according to a December poll that found 62 percent of people believed the Earth was getting warmer, an increase from previous polls. Nearly half of them based that belief on personal weather observations, University of Michigan and Muhlenberg College researchers found.

In Minnesota, golfers were greeting the sunshine at the Ea-

gle Valley Golf Course in suburban St. Paul that opened Tuesday—weeks earlier than last year's chilly, soggy spring start. Within an hour of its post-lunch opening, dozens of players were on the course, head golf pro Dan Moris said.

"We're hoping this is a sign of good things to come," Moris said.

The ice rink was empty at Chicago's iconic Millennium Park, where crowds were instead strolling and admiring the reflection of the skyline in a large, mirror-surfaced sculpture known as the Bean.

Nearby, new city residents Katie and Chris Anderson left work early to spend their second wedding anniversary on a tennis court. They said they were surprised by the weather because of Chicago's legendary cold winter.

"I was really nervous about moving here," Katie Anderson said. Her husband added: "We expected the worst."

In Boston, pedestrians traded puffy jackets and knit hats for short sleeves. At a tanning salon in the city's Seaport District, a pair of flip-flops sat in front of one tanning booth, and a pair of sneakers rested by another.

"Everyone definitely has

spring fever," employee B-Jay Angiulo said, adding that it was a good sign for business that two of the six tanning booths were full before 5 p.m. "I think the sun's out so people want to get a little spring color going on."

In Tennessee, where temperatures since December have been 4 degrees above normal, tourism officials said the weather should help their industry, including the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, country music attractions in Nashville and Elvis Presley's Graceland home in Memphis.

"People get out when the weather is nice," said Susan Whitaker, the state's tourism commissioner.

In downtown Washington, most of the benches at a local park were filled with people enjoying the weather. Taylor Jantz-Sell, a government employee, had brought some reading she needed to do to the park.

"This is my favorite time of year, watching the blossoms come out," she said, adding that she'd seen daffodils and crocuses, and ran to work Tuesday morning because of the weather.

"It's a sign of good things to come," she said.

Small child's fingers found in Hawaii trash bin

HONOLULU (AP)—For Gina Rose Vendegna, the horror of finding six tiny fingers in a trash bin at a Honolulu apartment complex didn't sink in until a day after she turned the plastic bag over to Honolulu police. "Then I broke down thinking about the child," the mother of five told KHON-TV. The fingers, which Vendegna found last month, are likely from a girl who's 2 1/2 to 4 years old, Honolulu police said. Residents of the 389-unit Kukui Gardens complex near downtown Honolulu and Chinatown are abuzz about the find, which came to light when police asked the public for help this week, said Kevin Carney, Hawaii vice president for EAH Housing, the San Rafael, Calif.-based company that manages the affordable rentals.

Asia

Afghan villagers recount weekend shooting rampage



Violent incidents fan feelings of mistrust

1. Jan. 12 Video surfaces; shows U.S. Marines urinating on the bodies of dead Taliban fighters made sometime in 2011 in Helmand Province

2. Feb. 20 Afghan workers find charred copies of Quran in fire pit at U.S.-run Bagram Air Base

3. Feb. 23 Two U.S. soldiers shot dead by Afghan soldier at base during protest over quran burnings

4. Feb. 24 Two U.S. officers, advisors to Afghan Interior Ministry, shot at close range in high-security area by police intelligence officer

5. Feb. 27 Suicide bomber kills nine, including two U.S. soldiers, at base in Jalalabad

6. March 1 Two U.S. soldiers killed at a base in Kandahar by two Afghan soldiers and a civilian literacy instructor

7. March 11 U.S. soldier walks off base and kills 16

Source: Reuters, AP, ESRI
Graphic: Judy Treible © 2012 MCT

BALANDI, Afghanistan (AP)—As bullets flew, the Afghan woman scooped up her 3-year-old niece and ran for their lives. Moments later, the woman was dead and the girl lay bleeding from a gunshot wound.

It was the closing scene of a massacre that left 16 civilians, including nine children, dead in two villages in southern Kandahar province.

The U.S. is holding an Army staff sergeant that military officials say slipped off a U.S. base before dawn Sunday, walked to the villages, barged into their homes and opened fire. Some of the corpses were burned. Eleven were from one family. Five other people were wounded.

The military said Tuesday there was probable cause to continue holding the soldier, who has not been named, in custody. U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta has said he could face capital punishment.

Villagers—angry at foreign troops, frustrated with their government and tired of war—recounted the tragedy to a delegation sent to the scene by President Hamid Karzai. Two who lost relatives insisted that not one—but at least two—soldiers took part in the shootings.

President Barack Obama pledged a thorough investigation, saying the U.S. was taking the case “as seriously as if it was our own citizens, and our children, who were murdered.”

In Afghanistan’s first significant demonstration since

the killings, protesters in the east burned an effigy of Obama as well as a cross, which they used as a symbol of people—like many Americans—who are Christians. They also called for the death of the soldier who has been accused.

On Tuesday, there was even more gunfire in Balandi, the village where 12 civilians were killed.

Taliban insurgents opened fire from behind some trees at members of the delegation, including two of Karzai’s brothers. One Afghan soldier died of a gunshot wound to the head, while Afghan security forces returning fire killed three militants. Delegation members escaped unharmed.

Sunday’s shooting rampage began in Balandi, a village about 1.5 kilometers (nearly a mile) south of the base.

Mohammad Wazir told the delegation that he was out of town when 11 of his relatives were slain at his house about 2:30 a.m. Someone called him in Spin Boldak, where he works as a farmer, and he hurried home to Panjwai district.

He said his sister told him that she heard gunfire and saw at least two soldiers firing inside their walled compound before she ran to hide in the kitchen of her uncle’s home nearby.

“Everybody was shouting,” Wazir said his sister told him. “My mother was in the yard closest to the Americans. They shot and killed her.”

“My brother was shouting, ‘Why are you shooting?’ and they killed him,” Wazir said. “Everybody was running in different directions. The children were running in one direction. The women were running in another direction, but they kept shooting.”

When his sister emerged from her kitchen hideout, 11 members

of Wazir’s family were dead: his wife, mother, two sons, three daughters, his brother and sister-in-law, a nephew and a niece. Pieces of burned blankets were found near the bodies.

“My sister said that not only had they killed my family members, but they burned their bodies,” Wazir said.

Members of the delegation said another man was killed inside his home in the village. They did not provide details of his death.

After the killings in Balandi, south of the base, four other people were gunned down in the village of Alkozai, about 1 kilometer (less than a mile) north of the base.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Sri Lanka govt minister urges boycott of US goods

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—A government minister urged Sri Lankans on Tuesday to boycott American products because U.S. support of a U.N. human rights resolution would encourage separatism in the island nation. A resolution calling on Sri Lanka to investigate alleged abuses during the country’s civil war is expected to be voted on next week by the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva. Government troops defeated the Tamil Tiger rebels to end a quarter-century civil war in 2009, and Housing Minister Wimal Weerawansa told a protest meeting that the resolution amounts to calling for the revival of the rebel group.

Myanmar gives Karen rebel 20-year term for treason

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—An ethnic rebel leader was sentenced to 20 years in prison for high treason Tuesday in Myanmar, whose new government is trying to reach a cease-fire agreement with the Karen and other longfractious ethnic groups. The court in northern Yangon also gave Mahn

Nyein Maung a three-year sentence for unlawful association, to be served concurrently, his lawyer Aung Thein said. He is a central executive committee member of the Karen National Union, which has been seeking greater autonomy for more than half a century and has carried out an armed struggle for most of that time.

US vets, Japanese mark anniversary of Iwo Jima

TOKYO (AP)—American veterans and Japanese dignitaries have gathered on the remote island of Iwo Jima to mark the 67th anniversary of one of World War II’s bloodiest and most symbolic battles. Brass bands played under a blazing sun as guests from both nations stood to salute their flags Wednesday near the foot of Mount Suribachi, where five U.S. Marines and a Navy corpsman raised the U.S. flag in 1945. A photo of them would become the most iconic image of the war. Fighting began on Feb. 19, 1945, and Iwo Jima was declared secure on March 26. The battle claimed 6,821 American and 21,570 Japanese lives.

Workers to raise ferry in deadly Bangladesh crash

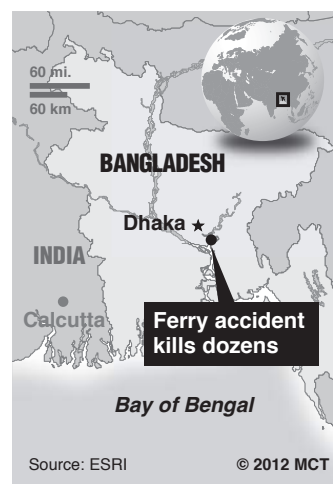
DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)—Recovery workers were trying to raise the wreckage of a ferry that capsized on a river in Bangladesh while carrying about 200 people, hoping Wednesday’s efforts would reveal the fate of dozens of passengers still missing. The death toll stood at 42.

The ferry collided with a cargo boat and capsized in the darkness of Tuesday morning, sending hundreds of people into the Meghna River, just south of the capital, Dhaka. Local police chief Mohammad Shahabuddin Khan said about 35 survivors were plucked out of the water, while local media reported that another 40 managed to swim to shore.

The death toll climbed to 42 on Wednesday after villagers and rescuers found more bodies floating near the scene of the accident, said rescue official Mahfuzul Haque. Divers recovered 31 bodies from inside the sunken ferry the day before.

The dead included a young woman found cradling her baby’s lifeless body, Khan said.

“The death toll is likely to rise as more bodies are feared trapped inside,” police official



Khan said. “We will get a better picture of the casualties once the sunken ferry is pulled out of the water.”

Ferry accidents, often blamed on overcrowding, faulty vessels and lax rules, are common in Bangladesh, a low-lying delta nation of 160 million people.

Khan said a bigger rescue vessel, MV Hamza, reached the scene Wednesday morning and would work on salvaging the sunken boat. The ferry sank in about 70 feet (21 meters) of water.

Khan could not specify how many people were missing but

said many were feared dead. It is difficult to get a reliable estimate for the number of passengers as ferry operators rarely keep a list and most passengers buy tickets once on board.

Some of the bodies inside the sunken ferry were buried under cargo, said Mohammad Alauddin, a diver who was among the searchers.

Hundreds of anxious people, many of them weeping, gathered near the scene of the accident Tuesday to look for their loved ones.

The MV Shariatpur-1 was traveling to Dhaka from neighboring Shariatpur district to the southwest. The accident site is in Munshiganj district, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) south of Dhaka.

Survivor Dulal Dewan described chaos as the ferry and cargo boat collided.

“I was awakened with a big jolt,” said the businessman, who had been asleep on the top deck. “I jumped into the river in darkness as the ferry started going down.”

“In minutes there were screams all around,” he said. “People were shouting for help.”

First Year Death Anniversary

In Loving Memory of

† Jesus Ricardo Palacios Agulto

We, the family humbly invite all our relatives and friends to join us in prayers as we commemorate the passing of our dearly “Jesus” unto eternal life.

Nightly Mass will be offered at 6:00PM beginning on March 12 through March 20, 2012 at the San Vicente Church.

Please join us in prayers

Si Yu’us Ma’ase – Thank You

Rita R. Agulto children and family

World

Fleeing Syrian city under fire

By RODRIGO ABD
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Editor's Note: Award-winning journalists Rodrigo Abd and Ahmed Bahaddou sneaked into Syria and spent nearly three weeks reporting from opposition-held territory. Abd, an Associated Press photographer, is based in Guatemala. Bahaddou is a video journalist on assignment for the AP, based in Turkey.

ANTAKYA, Turkey (AP)—Explosions illuminated the night as we ran, hoping to escape Syria after nearly three weeks of covering a conflict that the government seems determined to keep the world from seeing. Tank shells slammed into the city streets behind us, snipers' bullets whizzed by our heads and the rebels escorting us were nearly out of ammunition.

It seemed like a good time to get out of Syria.

With regime forces closing in on the rebel-held northern city of Idlib, Associated Press cameraman Ahmed Bahaddou and I set out Sunday for neighboring Turkey on a journey that would take us through a pitch-black passage and miles of muddy olive groves in the freezing cold.

We ran into delays and dangers with every step—from fighting between rebel and government forces to a missed connection with our guide.

We coordinated our escape with the Free Syrian Army, the rebel force fighting to hold onto Idlib, but the situation was deteriorating quickly. The snipers, shelling and explosions were growing ever closer.

"We are all going to be killed!" a terrified Syrian activist told me, collapsing into tears. An FSA fighter said the government troops were sure to take the city back, because the rebels were running out of ammunition.

A rebel commander said he understood if his fighters wanted to run away and save themselves.

"Whoever wants to leave and not fight, lay your Kalashnikovs

here," he said.

Nobody did.

Last week, troops had encircled Idlib, and tank shells starting pounding the city from dawn until evening. Rebels dashed through the streets, taking cover behind the corners of buildings as they clashed with the troops. Wounded fighters were piled into trucks bound for places where they could be treated. I saw a man carrying a young boy, the child's jacket soaked in blood. I later learned the boy was dead.

On Tuesday, just one day after we made it out, government forces recaptured Idlib, although activists reported some pockets of resistance remained. Still, it was a blow to the rebels.

The regime says it is fighting foreign terrorists and armed gangs, denying that the yearlong uprising is a popular revolt. But what we saw in Idlib was nothing like what the government is describing. The townspeople support the uprising; every family seemed to have a fighter in the streets, or knew somebody who was fighting.

The FSA rebels were Syrians, from Idlib. We did not see any foreigners doing battle.

The biggest challenge for the rebels was not their fervor to fight; they all seemed willing to die to oust the regime of President Bashar Assad. They were armed with little more than rocket-propelled grenades, Kalashnikov machine guns and grenades.

The opposition's rallying cry in recent days has been an appeal for weapons. An influx of anti-tank missiles and other heavy arms could be a turning point in the conflict.

But as government forces moved in last week, all we could think of was Baba Amr—the neighborhood in the Syrian city of Homs that endured nearly four weeks of government shelling. Hundreds of people were killed in the siege, and the humanitarian situation was catastrophic. Among the dead were two journalists, Marie Colvin, a

veteran American-born war correspondent for Britain's Sunday Times, and Remi Ochlik, 28, a French photojournalist. Both were cut down when a shell struck nearby.

Idlib was believed to be the next target now that the government had recaptured Baba Amr. As the rebels gathered on street corners, families packed a few possessions and rushed to leave the city. Women and children hid in basements to escape the shelling.

"Of course I am afraid!" a Syrian woman cried in one of the shelters, where a dozen women and children hid Saturday. "Even the men are afraid."

By Saturday, many people fled Idlib to reach surrounding villages. Electricity was switched off most of the day, lasting only about three hours, in what was likely an attempt by the government to clear out the population.

Everybody was preparing for a siege, making our escape all the more complicated. We decided to spend the night among the wounded in Idlib, delaying our departure, because we were too scared to move. As we drove through the dark streets, the driver turned off the headlights so nobody would detect us—even though that meant we could not see anything either.

The thundering "BOOM! BOOM!" from tank shells was relentless.

When we woke up the next morning, the toll of the violence we had somehow escaped was apparent: Wounded people, including children and women, were crowded around in blood-stained clothes. Many had clearly been hit by snipers in the legs and arms. Many had gaping wounds from shrapnel and died in their beds.

There was no space in the morgue for more corpses, so families arranged to bury the dead immediately. Funerals were out of the question because of the danger of being outside.

When evening fell, we decided to leave the city.

on all matters of state, over the choice of intelligence chief.

Ahmadinejad resisted for 11 days an order from Khamenei to reinstate intelligence minister Heidar Moslehi who had been sacked by the president in April 2011.

The president was also asked about a dramatic hike in prices and his failure to provide a budget to Tehran's subway system.

The lawmakers also asked about the government's allegedly accelerated implementation of an austerity plan to slash energy and food subsidies.

Environment

ADB warns of mass migration in the wake of climate change



In this Jan. 23, 2012, file photo, residents walk around through the debris of their neighborhood after a tornado ripped through the Trussville, Ala. area.

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Asian Development Bank is warning countries to prepare for influxes of people fleeing natural disasters as climate change exacerbates rising sea levels, soil degradation and seasonal flooding.

Natural disasters drove 42 million people from their homes in the Asia-Pacific in 2010 and 2011, though it was unclear how many of those were caused by climate change, the bank said in a study released Tuesday.

It said that one-third of Southeast Asia's population lives in at-risk areas, including Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

Six of the 10 countries most vulnerable to climate change are in the Asia-Pacific. Bangladesh tops the list followed by India, Nepal, the Philippines, Afghanistan and Myanmar.

The study did not make

any specific projections for migration induced by climate change, noting that the numbers are difficult to estimate as migration decisions often depend on a wide array of factors, including poverty.

"Given that climate change acts as an aggravating factor for environmental degradation, it is expected to boost the number of people migrating because of environmental changes, both sudden and slow onset. Though the amplitude of these movements remains difficult to forecast, climate change is likely to become a major driver of migration in the 21st century," it said.

It cited the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a U.N. network of 2,000 scientists, as saying that the Asia-Pacific will bear the brunt of significant temperature increases, changing rainfall patterns,

greater monsoon variability, sea-level rise, floods, and more intense tropical cyclones. Most scientists expect such changes to accompany a rise in the planet's temperature caused in part by greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels for electricity and transport.

The region is particularly vulnerable because of its high population density and long coastlines.

Recent examples of such migration include Papua New Guinea, where residents of Carteret and neighboring atolls moved to the island of Bougainville because of rising sea levels.

In 2010, more than 10 million Pakistanis were displaced by monsoon rains and flooding along the Indus River basin, and last year, a typhoon ravaged the southern Philippines, displacing more than 300,000 people.

New figures: More of US at risk to sea level rise

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP SCIENCE WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—Global warming-fueled sea level rise over the next century could flood 3.7 million people in 544 U.S. cities temporarily, according to a new method of looking at risk of rising seas published in two scientific papers.

The cities that have the most people living within three feet (one meter) of high tide—the projected sea level rise by the year 2100 made by many scientists and computer models—are in Florida, Louisiana, and New York. New York City, often not thought of as a city prone to flooding, has 141,000 people at risk, which is second only to New Orleans' 284,000. The two big Southeast Florida counties, Miami-Dade and Broward, have 312,000 people at risk combined.

"Southeast Florida is definitely the highest density of

population that's really on low coastal land that's really most at risk," said lead author Ben Strauss, a scientist at Climate Central. Climate Central is a New Jersey-based group of scientists and journalists who do research about climate change.

The studies look at people who live in homes within three feet of high tide, whereas old studies looked just at elevation above sea level, according to work published Thursday in the peer-reviewed journal Environmental Research and an accompanying report by Climate Central. That's an important distinction because using high tide is more accurate for flooding impacts, said study co-author Jonathan Overpeck, a scientist at the University of Arizona's Institute of the Environment. And when the new way of looking at risk is factored in, the outlook looks worse, Overpeck said.

"It's shocking to see how

large the impacts could be, particularly in southern Florida and Louisiana, but much of the coastal U.S. will share in the serious pain," Overpeck said.

Sea level has already risen about 8 inches since 1880 because of warmer waters expand, Strauss said.

Sea level rise experts at the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration who weren't part of the studies said the results make sense and were done by experts in the field.

"All low elevation places in the many urban areas along the coast will become more vulnerable, like Boston, New York City, Norfolk (Va.), New Orleans, Charleston (S.C.), Miami, Washington, D.C./Alexandria (Va.)," said S. Jeffress Williams, scientist emeritus for the USGS, who wasn't part of the studies. "More people and infrastructure will be at increasing risk of flooding."

Iran parliament begins questioning Ahmadinejad

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran's parliament began Wednesday to question President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad over a long list of accusations, including that he mismanaged the nation's economy and challenged the country's supreme leader.

Ahmadinejad is the first president in the country's history to be hauled before the Iranian parliament, a serious blow to his standing in a conflict pitting him against lawmakers and the country's powerful clerical establishment.

The summons follows a long-awaited petition by a group of

lawmakers for a review of policy decisions by Ahmadinejad, who has come under increasing attacks in recent months from the same hard-liners who brought him to power.

Conservative lawmaker Ali Motahari, a prominent opponent of the president, read out a series of questions to Ahmadinejad in an open session of parliament broadcast live on state radio.

Some of the most hard-hitting focused on Ahmadinejad's alleged defiance of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has final say

Life & Style

Judge pares down 'Housewives' lawsuit with ruling

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A judge on Tuesday pared down Nicollette Sheridan's wrongful termination case by ruling that jurors won't consider a battery claim against the creator of TV's "Desperate Housewives."

The verdict will now focus solely on whether jurors believe Sheridan was fired from the show because she complained about an on-set dispute with series creator Marc Cherry.

However, the judge said attorneys can still refer to Sheridan's claim that Cherry struck her when they deliver their closing arguments Wednesday.

Defense attorney Adam Levin said Cherry was pleased that he had been vindicated of the battery claim.

Sheridan's attorney Mark Baute said the ruling will simplify deliberations and his client is still entitled to punitive damages if she wins. The actress is seeking roughly \$6 million for being fired during the show's fifth season.

Sheridan claims Cherry struck her hard on her left temple during an argument in September 2008. But the veteran

TV writer maintains he tapped her to give her artistic direction.

Testimony in the case ended Tuesday after nine days. One of the last witnesses—a set worker—offered a final twist when he told jurors he received an email that he believed called for the destruction of files related to the firing of Sheridan.

Construction coordinator Michael Reinhart took the stand in the packed courtroom over the objections of Levin, who suggested Reinhart might have been confused and misread the message.

Reinhart testified that the email made him uncomfortable, even though he could not remember its exact contents. He did recall that it contained the words "delete," "hard drive" and "Nicollette Sheridan."

Reinhart said he immediately deleted the message and believed it had been mistakenly sent to him after Sheridan filed the lawsuit in 2010. He said he called Sheridan's attorney Mark Baute on Sunday to tell him about the email because he wanted both sides to have all the information.



In this July 27, 2011 file photo, actress Nicollette Sheridan poses for a portrait at during The Television Critics Association 2011 Summer Press Tour in Beverly Hills, Calif.

"It started gnawing at me," Reinhart said. "I began to lose sleep over it."

Reinhart said he felt he was performing "professional suicide" by coming forward and had left his home for the past two days to dodge a possible subpoena.

Levin claimed Baute had

promised to find Reinhart work if he was fired for testifying in the case. Baute denied the allegation.

Reinhart has worked for the show for all eight seasons.

Baute has accused Cherry and ABC officials of engaging in a conspiracy to make it appear the decision to fire Sheridan had been made months before the dispute between the actress and Cherry in September 2008.

But two attorneys for ABC testified Tuesday about efforts they made to retain documents and said they never ordered any destruction of evidence.

Jurors have heard conflicting testimony throughout the case. A writer and co-executive producer said the decision to kill off Sheridan's role wasn't made until late 2008—after a human resources investigation cleared Cherry of wrongdoing for the dispute.

Numerous other witnesses, however, have said Cherry received permission to kill the Edie Britt character in May 2008, and it was a key mystery story line discussed throughout preparations for the show's fifth season.

Encyclopaedia Britannica to end print editions

CHICAGO (AP)—Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc. said Tuesday that it will stop publishing print editions of its flagship encyclopedia for the first time since the sets were originally published more than 200 years ago.

The book-form of Encyclopaedia Britannica has been in print since it was first published in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1768. It will stop being available when the current stock runs out, the company said. The Chicago-based company will continue to offer digital versions of the encyclopedia.

Officials said the end of the printed, 32-volume set has been foreseen for some time.

"This has nothing to do with Wikipedia or Google," Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc. President Jorge Cauz said. "This has to do with the fact that now Britannica sells its digital products to a large number of people."

The top year for the printed encyclopedia was 1990, when 120,000 sets were sold, Cauz said. That number fell to 40,000 just six years later in 1996, he said. The company started exploring digital publishing the 1970s. The first CD-ROM version was published in 1989 and a version went online in 1994.

The final hardcover encyclopedia set is available for sale at Britannica's website for \$1,395.

"The sales of printed encyclopedias have been negligible for several years," Cauz said. "We knew this was going to come."

The company plans to mark the end of the print version by

making the contents of its website available free for one week, starting Tuesday.

Online versions of the encyclopedia now serve more than 100 million people around the world, the company said, and are available on mobile devices. The encyclopedia has become increasingly social as well, Cauz said, because users can send comments to editors.

"A printed encyclopedia is obsolete the minute that you print it," Cauz said. "Whereas our online edition is updated continuously."

Lynne Kobayashi of the Language, Literature & History section of the Hawaii State Library notes there will always be people who prefer using print

sources over electronic sources. However, the proliferation of publishers of electronic databases has resulted in an audience becoming attuned to online searching.

"There are many advantages to online searching, chief among them the ability to search within the text," Kobayashi said. "The major disadvantage is the need for a computer or devices with access to the Internet."

Kobayashi noted that whether she uses traditional methods in doing research or going online depends on the question she wants answered.

"Sometimes subject knowledge and familiarity with standard resources may get faster results than keying in a search and

sifting through results," she said. "If the search is broader, searching across several online sources may yield more options."

Britannica has thousands of experts' contributors from around the world, including Nobel laureates and world leaders such as former President Bill Clinton and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. It also has a staff of more than 100 editors.

"To me, the most important message is that the printed edition was not what made Britannica," Cauz said. "The most important thing about Britannica is that Britannica is relevant and vibrant because it brings scholarly knowledge to an editorial process to as many knowledge seekers as possible."

Longtime Doobie Brothers drummer Hossack dies

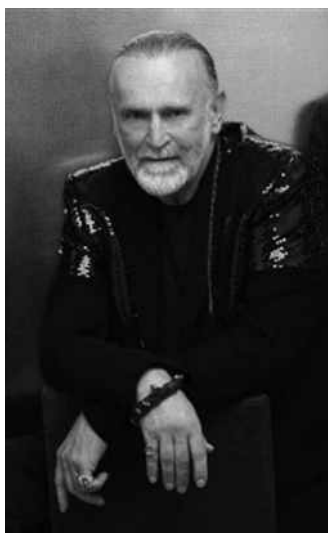
DUBOIS, Wyo. (AP)—Longtime Doobie Brothers drummer Michael Hossack, whose work is heard on the hits "Listen To The Music" and "China Grove," died of cancer at age 65, his manager said Tuesday.

Hossack died Monday at his home in Dubois, Wyo., manager Bruce Cohn said in a statement.

Hossack played with the group from 1971 to 1973 and rejoined in 1987. He stopped performing with the band two years ago while struggling with his health.

"Mike has always been a part of my musical life and the life of the Doobie Brothers," said band co-founder Tom Johnston. "He was an incredible musician."

Hossack, who grew up in



In this undated image released by D. Baron Media Relations, Doobie Brothers drummer Michael Hossack is shown.

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John Carter

Friday		4:05	7:05	9:45
Saturday	1:05	4:05	7:05	9:45
Sunday	1:05	4:05	7:05	
Monday thru Thursday		4:05	7:05	

Taylor Kitsch, Lynn Collins
Fantasy, Science fiction • Rated PG 13

Synopsis
WALL-E's Andrew Stanton steps out from the world of animation into live-action with this adaptation of the Edgar Rice Burroughs character. Taylor Kitsch stars as John Carter, a Civil War soldier who finds himself magically teleported to the planet Mars, with fellow Wolverine star Lynn Collins joining him as love interest Dejah Thoris.

Silent House

Friday		4:30	7:30	9:50
Saturday	1:30	4:30	7:30	9:50
Sunday	1:30	4:30	7:30	
Monday thru Thursday		4:30	7:30	

Elizabeth Olsen, Adam Trese
Thriller • Rated R

Synopsis
Chris Kentis and Laura Lau (Open Water) return to terra firma for this remake of the "real time" Uruguayan thriller La Casa Muda. Their summer cottage vandalized by squatters during the off-season, Sarah (Elizabeth Olsen), her father, and her uncle begin the laborious process of cleaning the place up when noises from within hint they are not alone. Now the deeper Sarah ventures into the derelict building, the further the secrets of her dark past are dragged out into the light. As with La Casa Muda, Silent House was shot in one continuous take, a production style that allows the viewer to experience the swelling tension of Sarah's horror firsthand as she unlocks a diabolical mystery.

★ ★ ★

Dr. Seuss' The Lorax

Friday		4:10	7:10	9:30
Saturday	1:10	4:10	7:10	9:30
Sunday	1:10	4:10	7:10	
Monday thru Thursday		4:10	7:10	

Zac Efron, Taylor Swift
Children's/Family • Rated PG

Project X

Friday		4:20	7:20	9:35
Saturday	1:20	4:20	7:20	9:35
Sunday	1:20	4:20	7:20	
Monday thru Thursday		4:20	7:20	

Thomas Mann, Jonathan Brown
Comedy • Rated R

Act of Valor

Friday		4:00	7:00	10:00
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	10:00
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:00	
Monday thru Thursday		4:00	7:00	

Emilio Rivera, Roselyn Sanchez
Adventure, Action • Rated R

This Means War

Friday		4:25	7:25	9:40
Saturday	1:25	4:25	7:25	9:40
Sunday	1:25	4:25	7:25	
Monday thru Thursday		4:25	7:25	

Reese Witherspoon, Chris Pine
Comedy • Rated PG 13

Journey2: Mysterious Island

Friday		4:15	7:15	9:55
Saturday	1:15	4:15	7:15	9:55
Sunday	1:15	4:15	7:15	
Monday thru Thursday		4:15	7:15	

The Rock, Venessa Hudgens, Michael Caine
Adventure • Rated PG

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'American Idol' finalist tweets that he's gone

By DERRIK J. LANG
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

Jermaine Jones is apparently out on "American Idol."

The 25-year-old vocal instructor from Pine Hill, N.J., tweeted Tuesday night that he would no longer be on the Fox singing contest. He wrote on his official "Idol" Twitter account: "Ahttp://www I will no longer b on the show," but the post was later deleted.

A Fox spokeswoman declined to comment on the matter or confirm his tweet.

The so-called "gentle giant" was among the show's viewer-selected top 13 finalists after the judges gave him a last-minute spot among the 11th season's top 13 male semifinalists.

He was among the bottom three vote-getters last week after performing Stevie Wonder's "Knocks Me Off My Feet" but advanced to the group of top 12 singers.

"Idol" contestants in the past have been asked or forced to leave when the show deems that



In this March 7, 2012 file photo released by Fox, contestant Jermaine Jones performs on the singing competition series "American Idol," in Los Angeles.

their work or personal history is an issue.

Corey Clark was disqualified for concealing his arrest record during the second season in 2003. Frenchie Davis was also dropped from "Idol" that year because of her previous appearance on an adult website.

During the eighth season in 2009, Joanna Pacitti was shown advancing to the top 36 semifinalists after "Hollywood Week" but was later replaced. Pacitti released an album in 2006 and had ties to 19 Entertainment, which produces "Idol" with FremantleMedia North America.

Chris Golightly was dropped from the top 24 semifinalists in the ninth season in 2010 because he didn't disclose that he had a previous record contract.

In contrast, the singing competition allowed past finalists like the sixth season's Antonella Barba and the seventh season's David Hernandez to stay on after racy photos that appeared to be Barba leaked online. Hernandez was revealed as having once worked as a nightclub stripper.

Depp, Streep join call to lower 'Bully' rating

LOS ANGELES (AP)—More Hollywood heavyweights are joining the call for a lower rating on the teen-focused documentary "Bully."

The Weinstein Co., which is releasing the film March 30, said Tuesday that Johnny Depp, Meryl Streep and New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees have signed on to support the film.

Lee Hirsch's documentary on bullying in American schools has been rated R, which restricts children under 17 from seeing it without an adult. The Motion Picture Association of America, which oversees movie ratings, cited language as the reason for the R rating.

Distributors appealed the decision, but it was upheld by the MPAA.

That prompted a Michigan teenager who was bullied in middle school to start an on-line petition calling for a lower rating for the film so more young people can see it. She met with MPAA officials last week and delivered the 200,000 signatures she collected,

but the group declined to change the rating.

Katy Butler, a 17-year-old high school junior from Ann Arbor, now has nearly 300,000 signatures on her petition on Change.org. Among them is that of New York Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, who tweeted Monday that she supports the teen's effort to lower the film's R rating to PG-13. Gerry Lopez, chief of AMC Theaters, also added his name to the petition, the Weinstein Co. said.

MPAA spokesman Howard Gantman did not address the possibility of a PG-13 for "Bully" in his response Tuesday to the growing call for a revision of its rating.

Katy Butler, 17, a high school student, from Anne Harbor, Mich., right, delivers petitions of more than 200,000 signatures with Change.org, organizer, Mark Anthony Dingbaum, urging the Motion Picture Association of America to change the "R" rating to a "PG" for the "Bully" film in Los Angeles on Wednesday, March 7, 2012.



Clooney makes quiet visit to volatile Sudan region

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—Actor and human rights activist George Clooney made a quiet visit to a volatile border region between Sudan and South Sudan last week ahead of testimony he's giving before a U.S. Senate committee on Wednesday.

Clooney made the dangerous crossing from South Sudan into Sudan's Nuba Mountains region, Jonathan Hutson, a spokesman for the anti-genocide group the Enough Project, said Tuesday. Clooney saw burned-out villages and met with residents forced to seek shelter in caves because of aerial attacks by Sudan's military.

Violence has flared along the Sudan-South Sudan border since South Sudan seceded last year, and some experts worry the conflict could grow. South Sudan shut down its oil industry this year after accusing Sudan of stealing its oil.



In this Jan. 9, 2011 file photo, George Clooney stands outside a polling station on the first day of voting in Juba, then capital of southern Sudan.

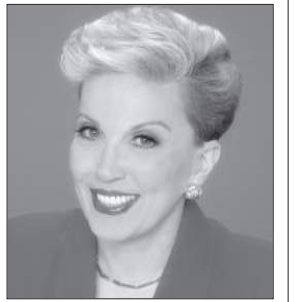
Wednesday's hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will examine the oil dispute and the limited access aid groups are being given to Sudan's southern regions. Aid experts say people who live in Sudan's Nuba Mountains will soon face a hunger crisis because they haven't

been able to plant crops amid fear of attacks from Sudan.

Clooney traveled to what is now known as South Sudan in January 2011 as the region cast votes to secede from Sudan. The vote was the culmination of a peace deal that ended more than two decades of civil war.

Wife's respect for husband shrinks as tall tales grow

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My husband, "Sam," and I have been married for 32 years, and all these years he has lied continually. It has gotten so bad that I cringe every time we're invited to family functions or get-togethers with friends. Sam uses these gatherings to be the star of the show, spilling out the most outrageous whoppers you can imagine.

My family knows when he's lying or exaggerating about something. They roll their eyes and nudge me to let me know they know. Sam fabricates the most outlandish stories and never owns up to anything he has done wrong. Instead he blames me or others for his actions. If I confront or challenge him, he gets defensive and says I'm "always" belittling or challenging him in front of others.

Abby, even though I still care for this man, I don't have the respect I wish I had for him. What can I do?

DISENCHANTED IN THE LAND OF ENCHANTMENT

DEAR DISENCHANTED: After 32 years, there is nothing you can do about it. Your husband has a personality problem—probably related to insecurity—that causes him to lie to get attention. It's pathetic, really. However, to embarrass him by pointing it out in front of others is cruel and unproductive. Until he's ready to admit to himself that he has damaged his credibility so badly that no one believes a word he says, nothing will change.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My close friend "Kate" has just told me she's getting a divorce. She confided that she cheated on her husband, "Phil," and says she doesn't want to try to work on her marriage, even though they have a baby together. Kate says that Phil is a great father and he's not abusive—she just doesn't love him anymore.

This came as a shock to me, and I'm not sure how to be supportive. When I divorced, my husband was the one who cheated and left me, so I know how Kate's husband feels. I know I should be sympathetic to her, but I don't know what to say. Can you help?

TRYING NOT TO JUDGE

DEAR TRYING: Continue trying not to judge. It is understandable that you'd identify with Kate's husband since his position is so similar to what you experienced. If you know and like him, befriend him. I'm sure he could use a friend right now. However, before you do, ask Kate if she would mind.

As to your question about what to say to her, all you really need to do is acknowledge her announcement by saying, "I'm sorry to hear it. I hope you have given it careful consideration." Period.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I'm 15. My father just started paying child support three years ago for my twin sister and me. He only pays a small amount each month, and he has never paid any medical or health bills for either of us in our lives.

Recently we found out he lied about his monthly salary so he wouldn't have to pay for us. I'm really hurt because I feel like he doesn't care about us. How do I cope? Help!

INCREDIBLY HURT IN THE SOUTH

DEAR INCREDIBLY HURT: While I can understand your disappointment in your father's lack of character, please do not allow his failures to make you think less of yourself. His behavior shows that he doesn't care about anyone but himself. Now that you and your mother know he lied about his income, it's possible the child support he didn't pay can be collected retroactively. If your mother hasn't discussed this with an attorney, she should do it now.

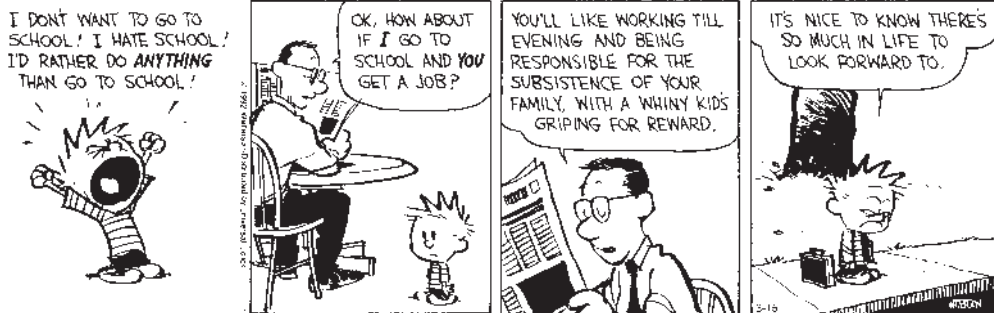
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

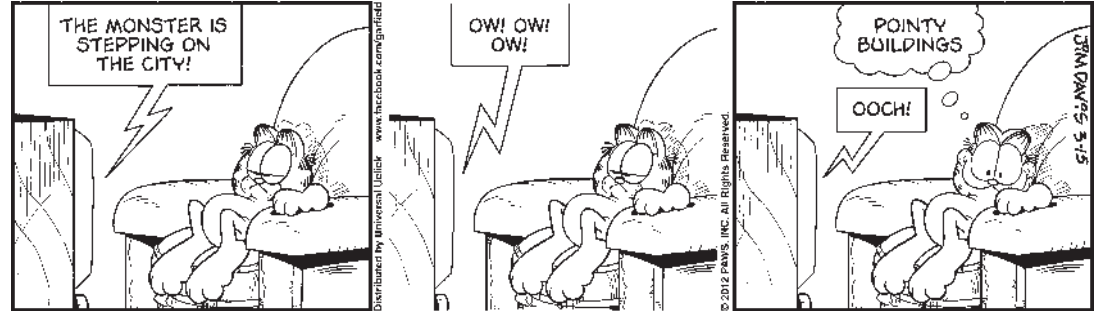
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



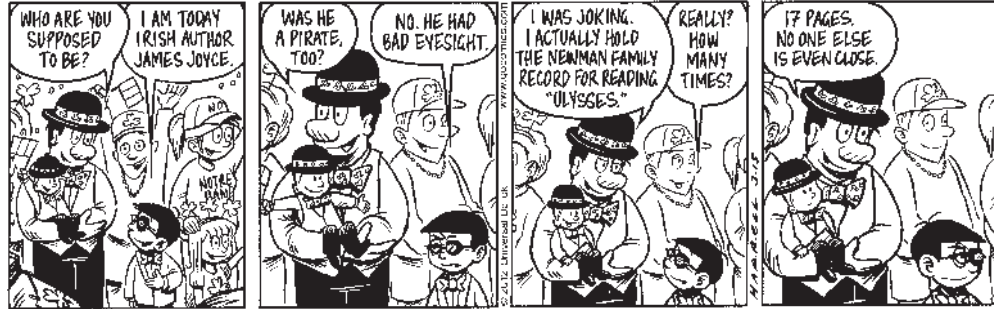
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By Jim Davis



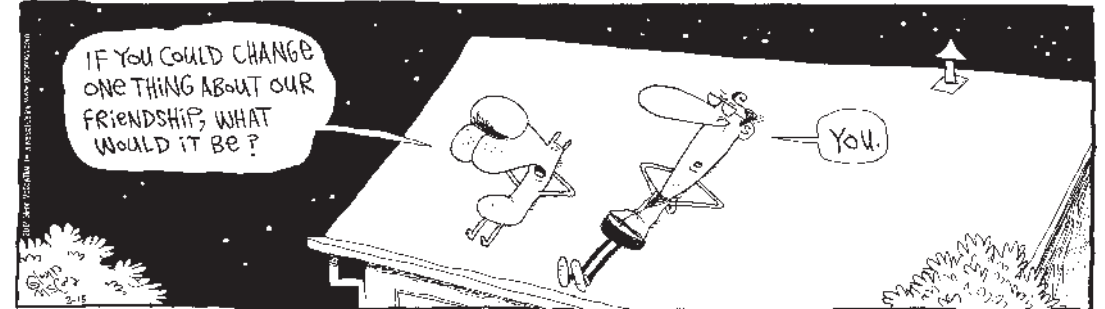
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

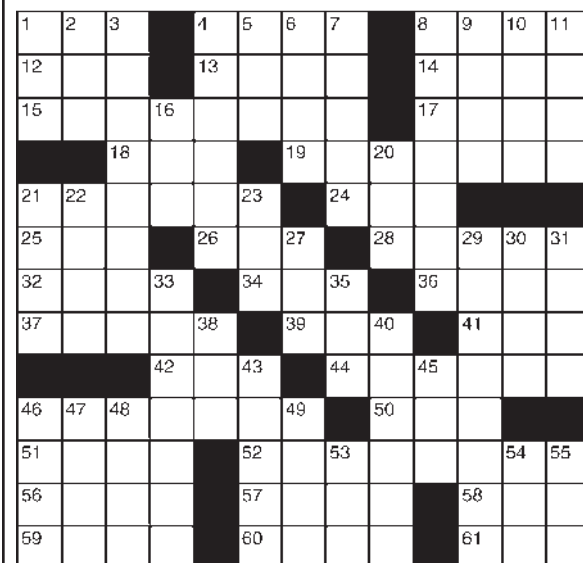
By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Chic, to output
- 4 Crooked
- 8 Implement
- 12 Tramcar contents
- 13 Decorative case
- 14 Unsightly
- 15 Relinquish the throne
- 17 Smile
- 18 Squid squirt
- 19 Big-time operator?
- 21 19-Across, e.g.
- 24 Chart format
- 25 "Eureka!"
- 26 Run-down horse
- 28 Financial advisor
- 32 Teeny bit
- 34 Deviate off course
- 36 Antitoxins
- DOWN**
- 37 Dickinson
- 39 Space
- 41 Water barrier
- 42 Suitable
- 44 Literary
- 46 Last major battle site of WWII
- 50 Lobbyists' org.
- 51 Actress
- 52 Suggest
- 56 Greatly
- 57 Dazzle
- 58 Driving site
- 59 Zilch
- 60 —a-ling
- 61 Right angle
- 20 Carnival site
- 21 Moist
- 22 Canton's place
- 23 Shaft of light
- 27 Choke
- 29 Treat an ailment
- 30 Asian sea, really a lake
- 31 Appellation (from)
- 33 Spring
- 35 Existed
- 38 Hot tub
- 40 Ornamental material
- 43 Checker move?
- 45 Buddy
- 46 Muscat's land
- 47 Narc's measure
- 48 Press
- 49 Con
- 53 Press for payment
- 54 —
- 55 Moray or conger

Solution time: 25 mins.



Yesterday's answer 3-15



STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99c per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kellan Lutz, 27; will.i.am, 37; Eva Longoria, 37; Bret Michaels, 49.

Happy Birthday: Everything is doable if you gauge your time wisely and plan your actions realistically. Added energy and discipline will help you excel. What you are willing to do for others will be matched by what you get in return. Love is in the stars, and working toward a better life will bring good results. Your numbers are 3, 9, 14, 23, 28, 31, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't take criticism personally. Keep your emotions out of the conversation. Listen to others and incorporate what you can to the best of your ability. Your effort will impress the people who count. Self-improvement projects will pay off. **

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Live and learn. The more you interact with others, the better informed you will be. You will make an impression by taking on a challenge. Traveling and participating in events that are conducive to love and romance are highlighted. ****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Think before taking action. Impulsiveness may appear to be necessary, but it will be costly in the end. Don't let your emotions determine your next move when a practical approach executed precisely is required. Protect your assets. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You'll be pulled in several directions. Take your time and make decisions based on facts. It's important not to jump to conclusions or to let

your imagination run wild. Take a wait-and-see approach. Love is in the stars. ***

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Concentrate on getting ahead. You don't have to outdo anyone; you just have to do the best job possible. It's what you have contributed that will count. Avoid disagreements with peers or lovers. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You will get a lot accomplished by planning. Enjoy the company of loved ones. Collaborating with a creative person will lead to plans that encourage incentives. Socializing with someone you love will lead to a closer relationship. *****

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Home improvements should be top priority, along with budgeting and stretching your money. Invest in what will bring the highest returns and focus on keeping the peace with partners. Avoid impulsive responses. **

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Mixing business with pleasure will pay off. Consistency will be key to attracting people who can contribute to your plans. Love is highlighted, and planning a social evening will enhance an important relationship. ****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Make changes at home that will help you be more resourceful and please those you count on for financial help. Confusion while traveling or misunderstanding what someone is telling you can be expected. Ask questions if you are uncertain. ***

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Focus on family and making your home more comfortable and user-friendly. Avoid impulsive decisions, especially if your choices will affect others. Put greater thought into your plans for the future before you continue. ***



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Take action and make things happen. It's up to you to do the legwork if you want to get good results. Rely on experience to help you make the right choice. Don't let anyone confuse you when it comes to your personal well-being. ****



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You can excel professionally if you dig in and do a good job. Interviews or sending out your resume will pay off. Connecting with people from your past will help you resolve issues that have held you back. Love is on the rise. ****

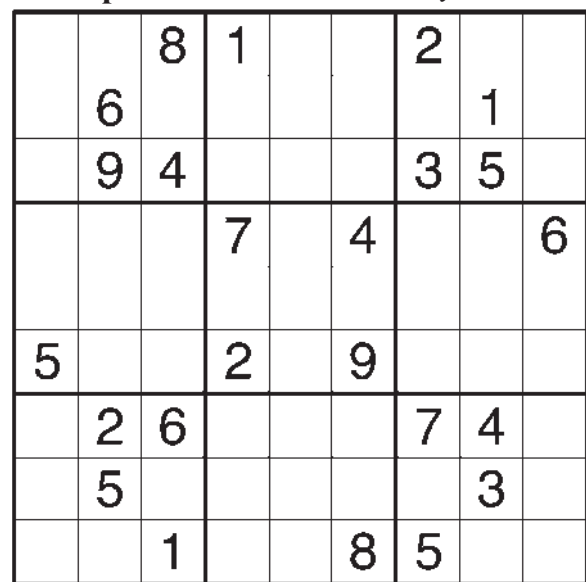
Birthday Baby: You are practical, hardworking and determined to reach your life goals.

Eugenia's Web sites: eugenialast.com for confidential consultations, myspace.com/eugenialast for Eugenia's blog, astroadvice.com for fun

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

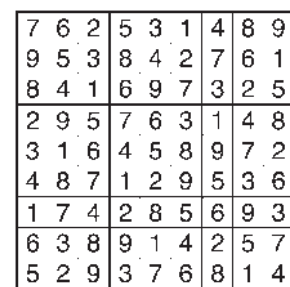


Difficulty Level ★★

3/15

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer



Difficulty Level ★★

3/11

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in this puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

MARCH MADNESS

Solution: 5 letters

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Annual, Athletes, Basketball, Bracket, Championship, Cheer, Coaches, College, Dance, Divisions, Dunks, Elite, Events, Finals, First, Four, High, Hoop, News, Pick, Play, Points, Porter, Ranking, Regional, Rival, Saturday, Schedule, Score, Season, Series, Shot, Sixteen, Slam, Sports, Spot, Star, Stats, Sunday, Sweet, Team, Tournament, Trophy, Upset, Week

Yesterday's Answer: Cool

Trade: THE COLLECTOR'S EDITION, Volume 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

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Bynum, Bryant help Lakers beat Grizzlies in 2OTs



MEMPHIS, Tennessee (AP)—Andrew Bynum had 37 points and 16 rebounds and Kobe Bryant scored 22 of his 34 points after halftime as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Memphis Grizzlies 116-111 in double overtime on Tuesday night.

Pau Gasol added 14 points and eight assists for the Lakers, who won their third straight.

Marreese Speights led the Grizzlies with 25 points, while Marc Gasol finished with 20 points and 11 rebounds. Tony Allen had 18 points, and O. J. Mayo scored 14, but was 7 of 25 from the field. Mike Conley finished with 10 points and 11 assists for Memphis.

The Grizzlies took an early lead in the second overtime, but the Lakers clicked off six straight points, including a pair of baskets by Bynum, for a lead they wouldn't relinquish.

Magic 104, Heat 98, OT

In Orlando, Dwight Howard had 24 points and 25 rebounds, Jameer Nelson scored 25 points, including 12 in the fourth quarter and overtime, to help the Magic rally past Miami.

It was the eighth 20-20 game of the season for Howard and the 40th of his career.

The Magic overcame a 14-point, first-half deficit to win their third straight and fifth in six games.

Dwyane Wade scored 28 points and Chris Bosh 23 for the Heat, who had a three-game winning streak snapped. LeBron James added 19 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists.

Nuggets 118, Hawks 117, OT

In Denver, Nene scored 22 points, Ty Lawson had 21 points and seven assists and Denver rallied to beat Atlanta in overtime.

Joe Johnson scored 34 points and Josh Smith had a season-high 33 points and 13 rebounds for the Hawks, who had a chance to win it at the buzzer.

Trailing by one with 3.5 seconds left, Atlanta got the ball to Zaza Pachulia at the foul line. He drove the open lane before Danilo Gallinari rotated over, and Pachulia missed a layup off the glass as time expired.

Gallinari had 19 points in his best game since returning from a severely sprained left ankle.

Johnson took control in overtime after Smith fouled out, scoring seven straight points in overtime.

Rockets 104, Thunder 103

In Oklahoma City, Courtney Lee and rookie Chandler Parsons each scored 21 points and Patrick Patterson blocked Serge Ibaka's point-blank putback attempt in the final 2 seconds as Houston charged back from an 11-point deficit in the last 3 minutes.

Lee drilled a 3-pointer from the left corner



Memphis Grizzlies center Marc Gasol (33) defends Los Angeles Lakers center Andrew Bynum (17) in the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, March 13, 2012, in Memphis, Tenn. AP

with 15 seconds left to complete a 13-1 run in the final minutes for Houston that was aided by a technical foul against Oklahoma City All-Star Russell Westbrook.

Kevin Durant led the Thunder with 28 points but missed a turnaround jumper from the top of the key in the closing seconds after fumbling the ball and recovering. Ibaka grabbed the rebound but his follow try was swatted from behind by Patterson.

Raptors 96, Cavaliers 88

In Cleveland, Jerryd Bayless scored 20 points as Toronto beat Cleveland for the third time this season.

Bayless started in place of injured point guard Jose Calderon and added seven assists while leading the Raptors to just their 14th win.

The Cavs had their winning streak stopped at three. Cleveland blew a chance to move into a virtual tie with New York and Milwaukee for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

Antawn Jamison, who has been mentioned in

trade rumors, led the Cavs with 20 points. Rookie Kyrie Irving scored 14 and Alonzo Gee 16.

The Cavs were still within six points in the final minute when Bargnani rebounded his own miss and dunked.

Pacers 92, Trail Blazers 75

In Indianapolis, Lou Amundson scored a career-high 21 points to help Indiana end a four-game losing streak.

Amundson shot 10 for 11 from the field and grabbed eight rebounds for the Pacers. His previous season high in scoring was 11, but he had 13 points in the fourth quarter alone.

Paul George, Danny Granger and George Hill each added 11 points for the Pacers. Hill returned after missing two games with a sprained left shoulder.

LaMarcus Aldridge scored 17 points and Nolan Smith added 10 for the Trail Blazers, who shot a season-low 31.3 percent from the field and made a

a season-low 20 field goals. Portland's five assists were the fewest by an NBA team this season.

Mavericks 107, Wizards 98

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 27 points and Jason Terry had 24 to help Dallas get a much-needed victory.

The defending NBA champions had lost eight of their previous 10 games. That included three road losses in three nights before a welcome two-day break leading into consecutive home games against the league's two worst teams.

Rodrigue Beaubois, who also had a couple of acrobatic plays to prevent turnovers, added 19 points. He had five in a row in less than a minute early in the fourth quarter to put the Mavs up 92-79.

Trevor Booker had 20 points for the Wizards (9-32).

The only team with fewer wins than Washington is Charlotte (6-34), which plays in Dallas on Thursday night.

Bucks trade Jackson, Bogut to Warriors for Ellis

MILWAUKEE (AP)—The Milwaukee Bucks traded Andrew Bogut and Stephen Jackson to the Golden State Warriors on Tuesday night for a three-player package headed by high-scoring guard Monta Ellis.

The Bucks also receive forward Ekpe Udoh and center Kwame Brown in the deal first reported by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* on its website.

The trade represents a parting of ways between the Bucks and Bogut, the No. 1 overall pick in the 2005 draft who has struggled with injuries. It also allows the Bucks to rid themselves of Jackson, who had fallen out of favor with coach Scott Skiles and now gets to rejoin his former team.

For the Warriors, the trade breaks up the small backcourt of Ellis and Stephen Curry and brings in the type of big man the franchise has been seeking for years.

"We're extremely excited to acquire a player the caliber of Andrew Bogut, who we think is certainly one of the top centers in the NBA," general manager Larry Riley said. "He will add an element of toughness to our team and will provide us with scoring, rebounding and a defensive presence in the middle. We've lacked those elements in recent

years and think that Andrew's addition will be a key factor in the growth of our team."

Ellis and Udoh left the team before Golden State's 115-89 win at Sacramento. The deal was announced shortly after the game ended. Ellis, whose future has been subject of trade speculation, was reminded that he recently said he wanted to stay with the Warriors long term.

"Well, everybody says that," Ellis said. "But sometimes it (doesn't) always work out like that."

The players won't be separated from their respective former teams for very long, as the Warriors host the Bucks on Friday night.

Bogut fractured his left ankle Jan. 25 against Houston when he landed awkwardly, and it's not clear if he'll be able to return this season. The original timetable for his recovery was eight to 12 weeks. It's one of several significant injuries that have plagued Bogut throughout his career.

Bogut missed the end of the 2009-10 season when he dislocated his right elbow, sprained his right wrist and broke his right hand in a hard fall to the floor. The injury bothered him for much of last season.

Bogut also missed significant time with an injured

lower back in the 2008-09 season.

When Bogut has played, he has played well. In 408 career games, he is averaging 12.7 points, 9.3 rebounds and 1.6 blocked shots.

The Bucks struggled in February without Bogut, but have won four of their last five to chase down the struggling New York Knicks in a race for what would be the No. 8 playoff seed in the Eastern Conference.

Jackson, meanwhile, hasn't played since Feb. 19, recently sitting out with what the team has described as a hamstring injury. Skiles benched him for a game in January after he missed a shootaround, he was suspended one game by the NBA for verbally abusing an official and his playing time has been limited ever since.

The deal brings the enigmatic "Captain Jack" back to the Bay Area. He helped lead the team's only playoff run since 1994, a surprising trip to the second round in 2007. In October 2009, the disgruntled Golden State star asked to relinquish his captain title during a meeting with Riley and then-Warriors coach Don Nelson. He was traded to Charlotte the next month.

Ellis has been the Warriors' main offensive threat,

averaging 21.9 points. But Golden State struggled to win with the backcourt tandem of Ellis and Curry. The deal clears a spot for 6-foot-7 rookie Klay Thompson to take over at shooting guard, adding needed size to the starting backcourt.

Ellis signed a six-year, \$66 million contract in July 2008, then injured his left ankle in August in a low-speed moped crash—an offseason activity prohibited in his deal as is a standard provision for contracts around the league. It cost him a 30-game suspension without pay.

Udoh is averaging 5.5 points and 3.9 rebounds in 21.8 minutes for the Warriors. Udoh is an athletic power forward who was Golden State's sixth pick in the 2010 draft out of Baylor. The Warriors hoped he would become a reliable defender, rebounder and shot blocker.

Brown, a former No. 1 overall pick by Washington, is likely out for the season with a chest injury and will be eligible to be a free agent this summer.

"The difficult part of this transaction is having to part ways with several players who we really value and one, in particular, Monta Ellis, who has been instrumental in our organization for the last several years," Riley said. "We wish Monta, Ekpe and Kwame the best of luck in Milwaukee and thank them for their many contributions."

WKU rallies to beat MVSU in NCAA opener



DAYTON, Ohio (AP)—So many things happened in those 5 final, furious minutes that Western Kentucky coach Ray Harper had trouble taking it all in.

“Wow,” he said, his face still flush with March emotion. “I don’t know where to begin.”

How about with that finish? There’s never been one like it in the NCAA tournament.

The only team with a losing record in the NCAA tournament got it started with a classic March comeback—in front of a presidential audience, no less. T.J. Price’s three-point play with 33 seconds to go completed the Hilltoppers’ rally from a 16-point deficit over the last 5 minutes for a 59-58 victory over Mississippi Valley State on Tuesday night.

President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron had front-row seats to see the tournament open with a ragged game that had a record ending. It was the biggest margin overcome by a team in the final 5 minutes to win an NCAA tournament game, the organization said.

The previous best: Illinois overcame a 15-point deficit in the last 5 minutes to beat Arizona 90-89 in overtime in a regional final in 2005.

“It’s a crazy feeling,” said Derrick Gordon, who had 11 points. “That’s the president of the United States coming to watch our game. We wanted to put on a show. Things didn’t work our way for the first 35 minutes, but we came away with the W.”

“I’m sure he liked what he saw.”

He saw the longest of long shots somehow pull out another one.

The Hilltoppers (16-18) are the only squad in the 68-team field with a losing record. They played like it for most of the game, shooting only 30 percent and turning the ball over 28 times.

After the buzzer sounded, Obama and Cameron headed out, fans still buzzing over what had just happened.

Madness indeed.

“You could see that look in their eyes: ‘We’re going to do this,’” Harper said.

Western Kentucky moves on to play Kentucky—the top seed in the South Regional—on Thursday in Louisville, an all-Bluegrass game for the second round.

BYU 87, Iona 72

In Dayton, Ohio, BYU pulled off the biggest comeback in NCAA tournament history on a wild opening night.

Noah Hartsock scored 16 of his 23 points in the second half and the Cougars rallied from 25 points down to beat Iona 78-72 in the first round Tuesday night.

Brandon Davies added 18 points and Damarcus Harrison 12 for the 14th-seeded Cougars (26-8), who advanced to play third-seeded Marquette on Thursday in Louisville, Ky.

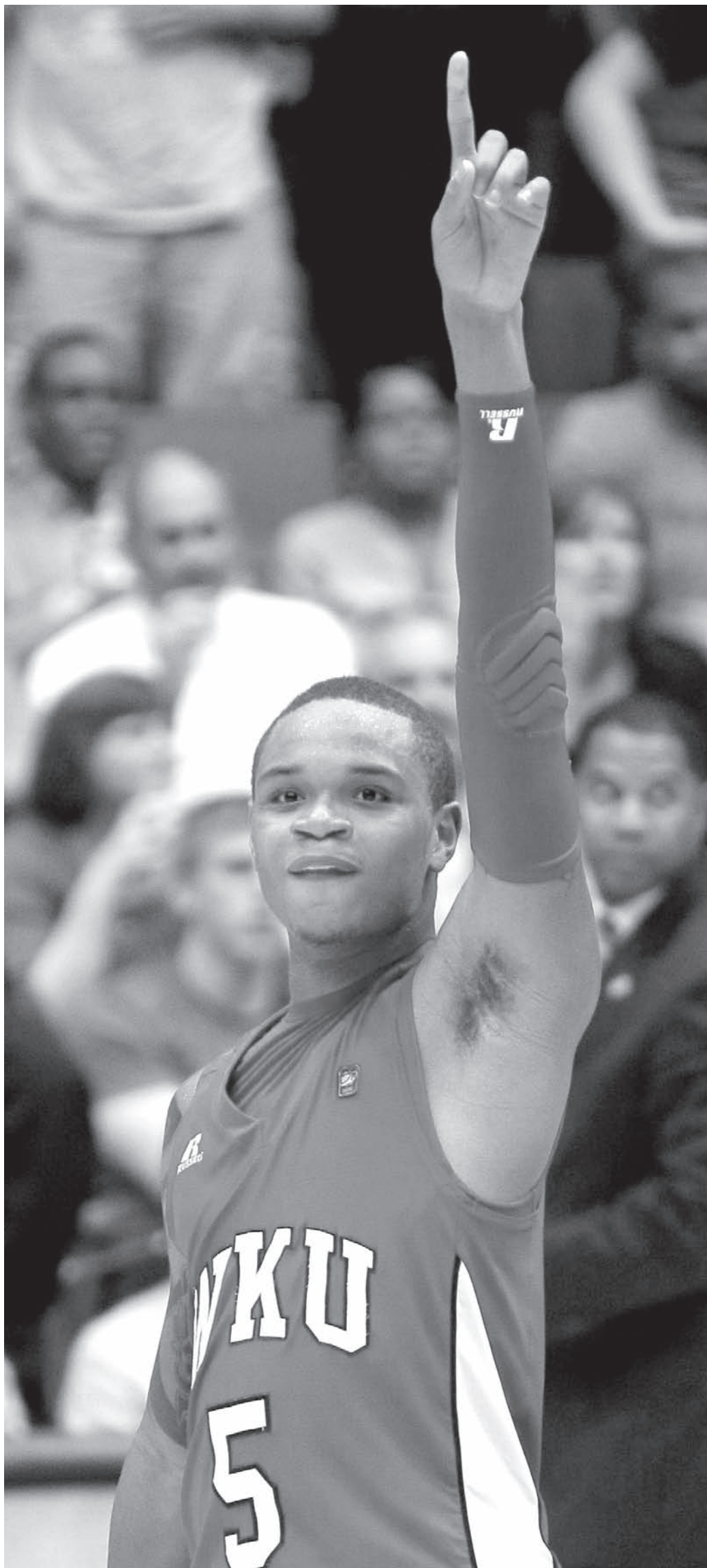
It marked the biggest comeback in an NCAA tournament game, the organization said. Previously, the largest deficit overcome was 22 points in 2001 when Duke fought back to beat Maryland 95-84 in the national semifinals.

Iona (25-8) seemed assured of its first official NCAA tournament victory after dominating the first half. But despite 15 points and 10 assists by Scott Machado, the Gaels dropped to 0-8 in NCAA play. Their lone win in 1980 was vacated due to NCAA violations.

Iona came in as the nation’s top-scoring team at 83.2 points per game and didn’t disappoint—at least in the opening 16 minutes. The Gaels scored 55 points in an eye-popping display of passing wizardry and outside shooting. Then they didn’t score over the final 4:30 of the first half.

Machado, averaging just under 10 assists a game, had nine at the break.

BYU then took control. The Cougars held the Gaels without a point for 9:20 in an 17-0 run to narrow the deficit to 62-61 midway through the second half. BYU made up ground with a trapping halfcourt defense that forced the Gaels out of their hurry-up-and-shoot-3s attack. At the other end, the Cougars were getting buckets from Hart-



Western Kentucky guard Derrick Gordon celebrates after his team defeated Mississippi Valley State, 59-58, in the opening game of the NCAA men's college basketball tournament, Tuesday, March 13, 2012, in Dayton, Ohio.

sock on fallaway jumpers.

Iona scored 55 points in the first 16 minutes, then managed just three field goals and seven points over the next 16 1/2 minutes.

Jermel Jenkins ended the lengthy drought with a 3 from the left corner with 8 minutes left.

From there on, the teams traded baskets as the pace slowed. Machado’s three-point play pushed the lead to 70-64 with 5 minutes remaining before

Hartsock hit an outside shot. After two missed foul shots by the Gaels, he hit another short turnaround jumper to cut the lead to two.

With 2:26 left, Hartsock popped out on the right wing to hit a go-ahead 3. It was the Cougars’ first lead of the game.

Davies added two free throws in the final minute before Brock Zylstra nailed a three-pointer, and the comeback was complete.

Colston stays with Saints, Marshall to Bears

By BARRY WILNER
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER



Marques Colston is staying put in New Orleans. Brandon Marshall is headed to Chicago.

Hours before free agency began Tuesday, the Saints’ star receiver agreed to a five-year contract to remain in the Big Easy. A bit later, Miami sent its top wideout, Marshall, to the Bears for two draft picks.

Then another receiver made headlines in Washington when Pierre Garcon joined the Redskins after the free agency frenzy began.

“This was important to me, to be back with this team in this situation,” Colston said in a statement released by the Saints. “I was not looking to chase free agency. It was more important for me to be back in our program, a program we have been building and a program I believe in.”

The top free agent, of course, is Peyton Manning, who was released a week ago by the Colts. He still is conducting his limited tour of teams, but the Dolphins’ trade of their No. 1 receiver could indicate Miami is out of the running for the four-time league MVP.

“Brandon Marshall out of Miami?” Dolphins center Mike Pouncey tweeted. “Tell me this ain’t true...”

Garcon had 188 catches for 16 touchdowns and a 13.4-yard average in four seasons with the Indianapolis Colts. Last year he had 70 receptions for 947 yards and six TDs as Indianapolis finished 2-14.

Washington, which is losing \$36 million in salary cap space over the next two seasons for excessive spending in the uncapped 2010 season, also re-signed defensive end Adam Carriker for four years and \$20 million, with \$7 million guaranteed.

Also re-upping with their teams were Giants cornerback Terrell Thomas, Eagles tackle Todd Herremans, Chargers center Nick Hardwick, Jets linebacker Bryan Thomas, Vikings backup quarterback Sage Rosenfels, Seahawks defensive end Red Bryant and linebacker Heath Farwell, Bears cornerback Tim Jennings, and 49ers linebacker Tavares Gooden, a valuable special teams player.

The Giants’ Thomas missed last season after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee in a preseason game against Chicago. The 27-year-old expects to be ready for training camp with the Super Bowl champions.

“I definitely wanted to come back here. This is home for me,” Thomas said. “Coming off an injury, it’s better to come back to the same team. You know the personnel and the staff, and they know you. You know the defense.”

Hardwick hoped to stay put in San Diego.

“I know how hard these guys work up here and how hard the coaches work and how much time they put in and how detailed and very specific everything is, and I couldn’t imagine going somewhere,” he said.

San Francisco, which signed enigmatic receiver Randy Moss on Monday, added cornerback Perrish Cox on Tuesday. Neither was in the league last year.

Cox is getting a fresh start with San Francisco, signing a two-year contract after being acquitted on sexual assault charges in Colorado earlier this month. Moss sat out 2011 when no team signed him.

Players released Tuesday include Cowboys cornerback Terence Newman, Texans tackle Eric Winston and backup quarterback Matt Leinart, Cardinals tackle Levi Brown and San Diego tackle Marcus McNeill. Look for teams to have strong interest in Winston and Brown.

Star linebacker-defensive end Mario Williams arrived in Buffalo, where he is the Bills’ first priority in free agency. Williams was limited to just five games last season before he tore a chest muscle.

Kyung Seo Ran wins CWGA March Ace

By **WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND**
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REPORTER



Kyung Seo Ran took the CNMI Women's Golf Association's March Ace after topping last Saturday's tournament on the west course of the Laolao Bay Golf Resort.

Ran posted a 46 on the front nine and finished with a 44 on the back for an even 90 gross that adjusted into a field-low net score of 71. She smoked the competition by four strokes as Masayo Miyamoto and Dolores Yamagishi finished with identical net cards of 75, but the former was granted runner-up honors via handicap rule.

Miyamoto started out with a 40

on the first nine holes and managed a 43 on the back nine for a gross of 83, while third placer Yamagishi nailed a 44 on the front and finished with a 48 for a raw count of 92.

Fifteen golfers participated in the monthly tournament. Other notables included a low-gross 80 by fifth place finisher Noriko Togawa (77 net) and a pair of raw 82s by sixth place finisher Shiori Onoue (77 net) and a 11th placer Yuko Togawa (79 net).

Ran is the final qualifier for next month's two-round season finale.

April marks the end of the CWGA season and the group will conclude the year with its annual two-day finale tournament, scheduled on April 14 and 15 at Laolao.

The list of this season's class of Aces and the current point standings will be released soon. CWGA utilizes a standard net score format, where a predetermined point system is tallied during the season. First place is awarded 15 points, 14 for second and so on down through the Top 10 finishers, and the rest receive a point for participation.

Established in March 2007, CWGA is a nonprofit organization founded to promote, encourage, and introduce women to the sport of golf. The group plays once a month.

For more information, contact Noriko Togawa at 287-0027, Lou Kim at 483-5255, Terry Tudela at 483-1761, Lorraine Babauta at 287-0621 or Bennet Seman at 483-0126.

D2Pats tops Islander Tag Team 8-Ball tourney

By **WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND**
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REPORTER



D2Pats' Pat Cepeda and Pat Taitano were hailed winners of the 19th Hole Bar & Grill's Islander Tag Team 8-Ball Sunday night in Puerto Rico.

The duo boasted a healthy double-digit lead over the field coming into the final round held last March 3 and 4. They finished the series heads and shoulders above the field with 35 points through eight pairings.

The series officially concluded Saturday night when Tasi's Oscar Sablan and Ed Blas came out on top of a three-way tie for second place.

Tasi defeated I Don't Care's Norman Tenorio and Quinton Ngirarios, 5-4, and went through third placer One Shot's Ron Chisato and Edward Suzuki, 5-3, before

IDC conceded in the third match after trailing, 1-4; all three teams finished the double round robin with 28 points.

Other participating teams included Elaus' John Mongami and Taylor Watanabe, Y-Not's Nolas Kaliga and Ben Norita, Leonize's Leonard Sablan and Nizer Masayas, and I Don't Know's Gus Taitano and Ken Phillips.

The Top 4 teams were presented with trophies with the Top 2 receiving modest cash prizes when the group reconvened Sunday night.

They also held a 12-man double-elimination potluck singles tournament on Sunday with IDC's Ngirarios coming away as the victor over team Elaus' Watanabe.

In addition, registration is now open for an encore Islander Tag Team 8-Ball series, which is set for March 17 and 18 at 7pm. Opening racks break at 7:30pm and 9:30pm.

Organizers are aiming to fill eight teams; slots are still available.

SEMIS

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elimination with a 6-1 record. Choi and Boranah notched two more wins last weekend, prevailing over Shirley's Badminton Club's Toshiko Obata and Annette Ta, 17-21, 21-15, 21-16, and Taga's Cristy Villaflor and Merlie Tolentino, 21-13, 21-17, to take the top seed in the women's A division.

The No. 1-ranked duo will face the Berks Blazkers' Lani Bartolome and Lucelle Lampera in the semifinals. Lampera and Bartolome clinched the last semis ticket last weekend, finishing the elimination with a 5-2 record. Third placer Cheng Saturno and Ana Alvarez of Golden Racquets also had a 5-2 card, but ruled the tiebreak with its 14 games won. Completing the semis cast was the mother and daughter tandem of Loyda

and Angie Ito, who holds a 5-1 record with one game left before the semis round start this weekend.

The Itos nailed two wins last weekend, downing Tolentino and Villaflor, 21-19, 21-13, and Marylyn Montano and June Padua, 21-17, 17-21, 21-8. Lampera and Bartolome also swept their last games, winning over Kim and Choi, 26-24, 12-21, 21-15, and Montano and Padua, 21-12, 21-12.

In the women's B division, only one semis berth is left after Lee So Young and Heo In Sook, Elma Labuson and Obata and Montano and Saturno had already clinched the first three Final Four ticket.

Lee and Heo went undefeated in five matches in Pool A to take the No. 1 seed, while Labuson and Obata had a 4-1 record to win the second playoff seat in the group. Montano and Saturno were the first ones to secure a

ticket to the next round in Pool B behind its unbeaten 4-0 record. Two pairs—Tolentino and Villaflor and Lampera and Annette Quiambao—will fight for the last semis slot and the winner will be decided after Friday's games. Tolentino and Villaflor were already done with their assignments in the elimination round, holding a 3-2 record, while Lampera and Quiambao have a 2-1 slate with two games left.

In the women's C, the Final

Four cast was completed last weekend with Midori Obi and Kazuko Sondheim, Jane Tupaz and Arlene Naguit, Rose Lazaro and Irish Pagarao, and Alma Ortega and Ester Choi advancing.

The crossover semis will be played this Friday and Saturday, while championship games will take place this Sunday.

Meanwhile, the list of semifinalists for the men's division will be published in tomorrow's edition of *Saipan Tribune*.

TSUNAMI

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The Tokyo Sprint is for swimmers in the U15 division and will feature tankers from various clubs in Japan. This will be the fourth time that the CNMI was invited to the annual competition. Last

year, Tsunami Saipan was also entered in the event, but the tournament was cancelled after tsunami and earthquakes hit Japan.

The eight Tsunami Saipan swimmers will compete in two events each.

Kensuke Kimura, who will be on his third and last stint in Tokyo Sprints, will be racing in

the boys 15's 100m IM and 50m breaststroke, while Takumi Sugie, the second oldest swimmer on the squad, will be competing for the first time and will join the boys 13's 50m freestyle and 50m butterfly.

Hiroto and Ryuto Yanai, Kang, and Tammy are also debuting in the Tokyo contest.

The older Hiroto is entered

in the boys 11's 50m freestyle and 50m backstroke races, while Ryuto will swim in the boys U8 division's 50m freestyle and 50m butterfly events. Kang, who missed his Tokyo Spint debut last year after the events cancellation, will finally have his taste of the 25-meter pool competition in Japan as he races in the boys 9's 100m

IM and 50m butterfly. Tammy is in the same age group and will also swim in the 100m IM and 50m butterfly.

Kaito Yanai will be seeing action in the annual tournament for the second time and is expected to deliver wins for Tsunami Saipan after his impressive debut in Japan in 2010. The 11-year-old swimmer won

the gold medal in the 100m individual medley, two years ago. He is entered in the same event this weekend and will also race in the boys 12's 50m breaststroke.

"We wish our swimmers all the best," coach Kimura said in an email sent to Tsunami Saipan swimmers, officials, and supporters.

CHECK

From Page 24

next two innings until Check It Out cranked out four runs in the sixth off eight hits. Omar, Connie Camacho, and Keolani Rios bashed RBI singles, Janet Jones a two-RBI base hit and Shirley Ada stole home after reaching on a fielder's choice. The other run came off a walk.

Sakudi mustered three runs off errors and RBI base single by Lebría in a last ditch effort, but Check It Out would not be denied.

Omar batted 3-for-3 with two RBIs and Jenelle Brel swung 3-for-4 with two runs, while Sakudi's Lebría went 4-for-4

with three RBIs and a run.

MEN'S SaiPal 20, Manelos 13

Manelos led it, 6-4, after the opening frame off four hits and a couple walks. It loaded the bases, which set the stage for a two-RBI single from Yupert Alepuyo and three-run homer from Nicko Martin. Ping Santos also bagged an RBI single.

SaiPal then seized the lead, 7-6, in the second inning with four more hits. Leo Bobai cranked a two-RBI single.

Manelos came back with three runs in the third inning from a base hit by Nick Cruz and a triple by Santos, but stumbled on the field in the bottom

frame, helping SaiPal pedal in front, 13-9. SaiPal capitalized on Manelos' early errors and had five hits including slew of RBI base hits by Luis Ngirake-lau, Alonzo Besong and Lefty Shiro and a two-RBI triple by Hector Ephraim.

SaiPal then contained its opponents to just a couple runs in the next two innings and was declared winner after five innings due to time constraints. Saipal poured on its other seven runs in the top of the fifth with a cheeky grand slam by Gloyd Martin in between some more errors.

Familia 16, Talu Fahn 7

Familia marched ahead, 6-0,

in the first inning off a three-run blast by JD Dikito, an RBI base hit by Lawrence Dikito, and a two-RBI single by Joe Guerrero.

Talu Fahn shaved three runs off the deficit in the bottom of the second from errors and a two-RBI smash by Nathan Bermudes and the count shifted to 8-5 after the fourth frame.

A two-run homer by Familia was thwarted by errors, but it regrouped in the fifth inning with seven hits for a commanding 14-5 lead. Kolin Reyes ripped an RBI single and John Guerrero and Jack

Sablan each cranked two-RBI base hits.

Berdax 15, Gagu Eyes 8

In last Friday's late game, Berdax spurted ahead, 7-0, with five runs off six hits in the second inning. Vaughn Hofschneider hit a solo homer and Shine Tenorio a two-RBI single. The other runs came from errors.

The count shifted to 9-2 after the third frame after Gagu Eyes' JR Brel and Berdax's Jesse Tenorio each lifted two-run blasts. Tyrone Omar tried to keep it going for Gagu Eyes with a home

run in the top of the fourth, but Berdax raised the ante to 13-3, in the bottom frame with a sacrifice fly by Dung Tenorio, an error and a two-RBI double by Ben Taisacan.

Gagu Eye's Swain Cango and Brel left the yard at the start of the fifth inning and managed three more runs in the sixth from an error and two-RBI base rip by Omar. But Berdax still held strong for the win with its last two runs coming off an error and an RBI base knock by Franco Flores. The group then pulled it together on defense for the last three outs.

XTERRA

From Page 24

son Freitas of Brazil, Takahiro Ogasawara of Japan, and Carina Wasle of Australia.

These pros are now in the Philippines for the second leg of XTERRA Asia Tour's "Triple Crown" and will complete the trifecta next Saturday when they compete in XTERRA's Crown Jewel. XTERRA Philippines will be held this Saturday and the first batch of pros will be arriving on Saipan on Tuesday.

Allen and Marceau will be the

triathletes to watch in XTERRA Saipan and Philippines after their 1-2 finish in XTERRA Guam. Though Allen (2:29:42) finished ahead of Marceau (2:33:22) in last weekend's XTERRA Guam, the latter will have a slight advantage in the Saipan leg next week due to his familiarity with the course. The Swiss won XTERRA Saipan for four straight years (2004-2007) before missing the event from 2008 to 2011.

In the women's division, Renata Bucher hopes to regain the championship she lost to Shonny Vanlandingham last year. Bucher won XTERRA Guam against

Wasle and Slack, who was in the lead after the swim leg and in the first few kilometers of the bike race before a wrong turn cost her to lose about 10 minutes in the second leg.

Saipan pro Mieke Carey also joined XTERRA Guam and will be aiming to improve her fifth-placed finish in last year's XTERRA Guam. Carey had early misfortunes in the bike leg during last year's race. Other Saipan triathletes competing in XTERRA Championship are Lewie Tenorio, Butch Sublemente, Brian Morris, and Dawn Hammermeister.

Activity Schedule for March 15, 2012

8:00 AM to 12:00 PM: Morning practices

6:30 PM to 9:30 PM: Evening practices

2012 Tan Holdings Intercompany Basketball League

6:15 PM: Saipan Grand Hotel vs. D&Q/CTSI

8:15 PM: POI/RMS vs. Fiesta Resort & Spa

There are no scheduled games.



Bynum, Bryant help Lakers beat Grizzlies in 2OTs

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Saipan Tribune Sports

WKU rallies to beat MVSU in NCAA opener



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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

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11 enter semis in badminton doubles tourney



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Saipan Badminton Club's Hannah Choi, right, returns the shuttlecock to Shirley's Toshiko Obata and Annette Ta, while Kim Boranah gets ready for the next play during their women's A doubles game in the Tan Holdings competition last Saturday at the TSL Sports Complex.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Eleven pairs had already secured semis seats in the 2012 Tan Holdings Doubles Badminton Competition.



Women's A division favorites Hannah, Choi and Kim Boranah of Saipan Badminton Club led the list of playoff qualifiers after completing the round-robin

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Tsunami Saipan swimmers leave for 2012 Tokyo Sprint



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of Team Tsunami Saipan that will compete in Tokyo this weekend pose for a group photo before a training session at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi last month.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The 12-person delegation from Tsunami Saipan leaves today for Japan to compete in the 2012 Tokyo Junior Sprint 2012 at the Tatsumi International Swimming Arena.

Leading Team Tsunami Saipan is head coach Hiro Kimura, who will be assisted by Shigeki Tenorio. Also on the group are Tsunami officials Yuko

Kimura and Yoriko Sugie. The four officials will assist swimmers Hiroto, Kaito, and Ryuto Yanai, Kensuke Kimura, Takumi Sugie, Lukas Kang, Angel Marie Tan, and Miku Tammy in the two-day competition that will start this Saturday. The

Tsunami Saipan delegates will arrive in Tokyo tomorrow and will have only one day to practice before the races on Saturday and Sunday.

See TSUNAMI on Page 23

Check It Out stuns Sakudi in women's league

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER



Check It Out pulled off an upset over defending champion Sakudi, 12-7, in the lone women's game in the Chamolinian Softball Association 2012 Budweiser Slow-Pitch Softball League last Monday night at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

Check It Out jumped on top, 4-1, in the first inning off three hits mixed with some costly errors. Jovie Omar bagged an RBI single, while Sakudi gained a triple from Liz Lebria in the top half.

Both teams went 1-2-3 in the second inning and the count shifted to 5-3 after the third frame. Sakudi scored off an error and another base smash by Lebria, while Check It Out answered with four hits in the bottom frame. Keina Rogopes poked an RBI single.

It remained at a standstill for the

See CHECK on Page 23



WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

Jovie Omar, pictured in this file photo, led Check It Out to a 12-7, victory over defending champion Sakudi during their women's game in the Chamolinian league last Monday night at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

XTERRA Saipan to draw around 100 athletes

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



Taga Inc. president Wolf Mojica said about 100 athletes are expected to compete in next week's 2012 XTERRA Saipan Championship.

"We have around 50 now and these exclude local athletes. We expect the number to reach 100 next week,"

Mojica said.

Local athletes have until March 21 to register for the March 24 event, which will have two courses—the XTERRA Championship and XTERRA Sports.

The XTERRA Championship will feature pro athletes, including former champions Olivier Marceau and Renata Bucher, first-timers Jacqui Slack, Cedric Lassonde and Graham Wadsworth of United Kingdom, and Ben Allen of Australia, and returnees Deni-

See XTERRA on Page 23